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THE PLAYS OF EURIPIDES.

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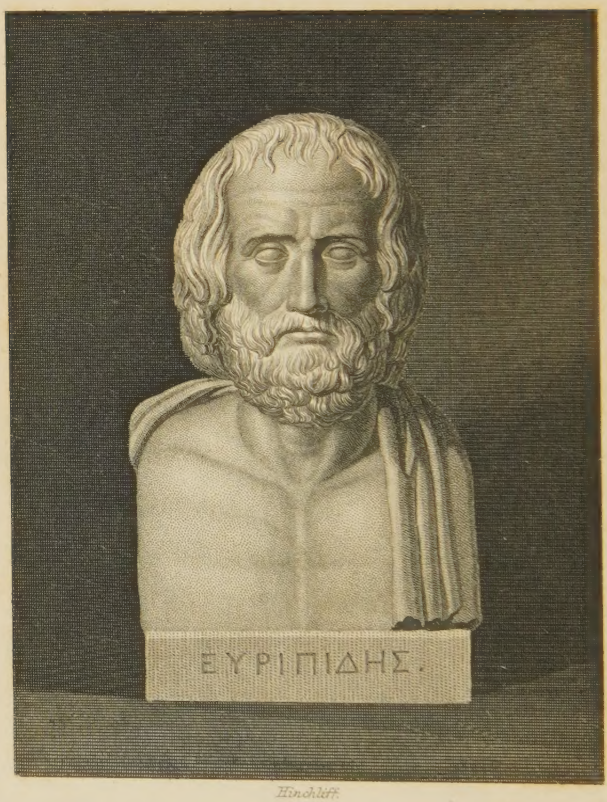

Hinchliff.

Euripides.

THE PLAYS

OF

EURIPIDES

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH PROSE FROM THE

TEXT OF PALEY

BY

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PREFACE.

IN preparing the following translation of the plays of Euripides I have followed the text of Paley as it stands in the "Cambridge Greek and Latin Texts' series" 1869. Similarly, too, the order of the plays conforms to his arrangement.

Without going into lengthy details for my choice of this text, I may briefly mention a few reasons for having selected it. First, there is the accessibility of this edition; secondly, its very general use to-day by the mass of English readers, in preference to the once popular "Poetæ Scenici" of W. Dindorf; and thirdly, its superiority in many respects to all previous editions of the complete body of plays, due partly to its greater fidelity to the MSS. readings, partly to the more metrical arrangements of choral passages.

In some ways, perhaps, the adoption of a particular text saves the translator much trouble by precluding him from straying far afield into the region of textual emendation; but, at the same time, it not unfrequently forces him into direct opposition to his own opinion, if he consents to follow it without any deviation and to yield implicit obedience to its authority.

At the risk of incurring the chance of inconsistency, I have, though as a rule adhering rigidly to Paley's text, occasionally allowed myself the liberty of following the emendations of other scholars, where for the sake of clearness or on grounds of probability, there seemed fair reasons for so doing; but in every such case attention is

called to the divergence in a footnote, and the actual Greek words of the variant text are quoted.

Into the question of MSS. authority I do not here venture to digress at any length. The majority of English readers probably take small interest in such investigations; while the few who do pursue them further, will naturally have good critical editions within reach, and in these a full discussion of this subject more usefully finds a place. Those, however, who, without making a special study of the MSS., wish to see shortly on what authority any particular play of our poet rests, cannot perhaps do better than read the few remarks offered by Mr. Gow on this subject in his excellent volume, entitled, "Companion to School Classics" (Macmillan, 1888). From his concise summary and from Paley's more exhaustive essay in Vol. III. of his large annotated edition of Euripides, I extract the following very brief account of the Euripidean MSS., omitting all superfluous details:—

(1) Nine plays are found *complete* in MS. Vaticanus (12th century), and in several other MSS. *in part*, viz.—Hecuba, Orestes, Phœnissæ, Medea, Hippolytus, Alcestis, Andromache, Troades, Rhesus.

(2) Seven others rest on the authority of two MSS. only, the Palatinus in the Vatican and Florentinus 2 (both 14th century), viz.—Heracleidæ, Supplices, Ion, Bacchæ, Iphigenia in Tauris, Iphigenia in Aulide, Cyclops.

(3) Three plays, Helena, Hercules Furens, and Electra are found only in Florentinus 2.

Another point requiring explanation, perhaps, is my treatment of corrupt passages. Only those who have set themselves carefully to examine the text of an ancient classic, more especially that of a Greek dramatist, can be fully aware of the difficulties that beset the student from first to last. The ravages of time, the ignorance of copyists, the more

dangerous officiousness of grammarians, the perverted ingenuity of successive editors infected with the pernicious "cacoethes emendandi," have all contributed in the course of many centuries to render the task of arriving at the genuine text an almost hopeless one.

"The whole question of the present state of our classical texts," wrote Paley, in the preface to his third volume of Euripides, "is one demanding a most careful and lengthened inquiry. If we cannot have them perfect, which is not to be hoped for, we must make up our minds to choose between adhering to the authority of the best existing MSS., or freely admitting the conjectural restorations of eminent critics, or we must adopt a cautious mean between the two, which consists in correcting *obvious* errors, to the rejection of all purely *speculative* or only plausible alterations."

It is this last method which Paley himself adopts; and, agreeing cordially as I do with his strictures on unwarrantable tampering with the text, I have endeavoured as far as possible, to follow his guidance through the tortuous mazes of textual corruption; with this reservation, however, that, as my purpose is a twofold one, being as much to enable readers unfamiliar with the Greek to understand the dramatist's meaning as to produce a faithful version of the original, I have, in dealing with passages avowedly corrupt, preferred to adopt *provisionally* an intelligible emendation to leaving an awkward break in the sense. At the same time, from a textual critic's point of view, Paley's remark is unquestionably true, "passages really corrupt should be marked as avowedly corrupt, not patched up and almost rewritten."

On the other hand, it is by no means certain at times, whether, in the attempt to follow the supposed genuine reading, an editor has not rushed to another extreme and committed an error, pleasantly described by a recent reviewer as "translating unintelligible Greek into unintelligible English and going on his way rejoicing." *Absit omen!*

As regards the addition of notes to this translation, the few that are given have, for the sake of the reader's convenience, been appended as footnotes, to avoid the necessity of referring continually to an appendix. They are of two kinds, dealing firstly, with variant readings and proposed emendations, and secondly, with obscure allusions; the former being by far the more numerous class.

Euripides is an author, about whom and whose writings so much has been written that a mass of notes is not only unnecessary, but apt to distract and weary the reader, who presumably wishes to know not what a commentator but what the author says and thinks. Still as there is occasionally an allusion, the elucidation of which is necessary to a full understanding of the context, a few explanatory notes have been added.

The adoption of Paley's edition as a *textus receptus*, has to some extent obviated the need of calling attention on every occasion to variations from the MSS., for that which he has admitted I have in the majority of instances tacitly followed; wherever I have diverged from him I have noted the fact and cited my authority for so doing; and occasionally, when unintelligible or corrupt passages occurred, more than one of the numerous emendations offered have been quoted.

There has been, and still is, in Germany, a large school of critics, who settle textual difficulties by a method only praiseworthy for its extreme simplicity; they at once pronounce spurious whatever appears to them hard to understand, and so relieve Euripides of a host of more or less time-honoured "cruces." Against such a charming plan for elucidating his author Paley resolutely sets his face, and, it may be, goes a little too far in the opposite direction in his sturdy conservatism and retention of passages almost certainly spurious or interpolated.

I do not feel called upon, in the capacity of translator, to

discuss the genuineness of any of the plays attributed to the poet. Where single lines have been called in question by Paley or Nauck, by Dindorf or Kirchhoff, I have generally noticed their objections, without, however, absolutely omitting the lines. But when the genuineness of large portions of plays is at stake, as in the case of the conclusion of the "Phœnissæ," or of frequent passages in the "Iphigenia in Aulide," to say nothing of the entire "Rhesus," I have not made any allusion to the voluminous controversies that have been carried on over them.

In alluding briefly to editions of Euripides, other than that of Paley, I cannot sufficiently express my debt to the critical *apparatus* prefixed to Vol. I. of the Teubner edition ("Euripidis Tragœdiæ ex recensione Augusti Nauckii. Editio tertia. Lipsiæ, 1887"), which I have consulted throughout; as well as to the critical notes appended to Hartung's edition, an edition one might employ with still greater advantage, were it not so full of his own daring and not unfrequently capricious corrections; to Jerram's useful little volumes in the Clarendon Press series, the value of which is immensely enhanced by the addition of brief critical notes on the most important variant readings; and lastly, to several editions of separate plays, amongst which for English scholars, Sandys' edition of the "Bacchæ" ranks *facile princeps* as a book which every student of Euripides will value and appreciate; to the careful but somewhat laboured works of Pflugk and Klotz, a few only of whose volumes I have read through; and lastly, to Verrall's edition of the "Medea," and Mahaffy's edition of the "Hippolytus," both of which works are full of interesting suggestions, although, like Hartung's, they seem to admit too many variations into the text. What Paley has called the "subjectivity" of the editor is almost too conspicuous; so that, what with rewriting in the one case and re-arranging in the

other, the originals are, as it were, old friends appearing with new faces. For a fuller account of the numerous modern editions of separate plays reference may be usefully made to Professor Mayor's "Guide to the Choice of Classical Books," new edition (George Bell and Sons). Of the older editions of Euripides, Paley gives a brief account in his introduction to Vol. III, cited above, from which and from the article on Euripides in Dr. Smith's large Biographical Dictionary, I extract a short *resumé*:—

(i) Editio princeps of Euripides, containing the Medea, Hippolytus, Alcestis, Andromache, probably edited by J. Lascaris, and printed by De Alopa, at Florence, towards the end of 15th century.

(ii) Aldus published 18 plays, omitting the Electra, at Venice, 1503.

(iii) An edition published at Heidelberg, containing the Latin version of Æmil. Portus and a fragment of the Danae. 1597.

(iv) Edition of P. Stephens. Geneva. 1602.

(v) „ of Barnes. Cambridge. 1694.

(vi) „ of Musgrave. Oxford. 1778.

(vii) „ of Beck. Leipzig. 1778-88.

(viii) „ of Matthiæ. Leipzig. In 9 vols. with the Scholia and fragments and a Latin version. 1813-29.

(ix) A variorum edition. 9 vols. Glasgow. 1821.

(x) The Fragments by Wagner. Wratislaw. 1844.

Of separate plays there have been almost countless editions; but here it must suffice to mention a few of the more famous editors: *e.g.*, Porson, Elmsley, Valckenaer, Monk, Pflugk, Hermann, etc., etc.

The only complete translation in English of any note, actually known to me, is an old one in verse by Michael

Wodhull (3 vols., London, 1809). In the author's preface to this work, an exhaustive account of previous attempts in the same field is given, which is not without interest as showing the critical stand-point of that age.

In more recent times we have had Robert Browning's "Balaustion," a beautiful poem in itself, and almost a *verbatim* translation of the "Alcestis;" while not a few scholars of modern days have shown their keen appreciation of the beauties of Euripides by presenting the world with verse translations of portions of his works.

In conclusion, if it is necessary to say anything on the vexed question of translations in general, one might perhaps defend them against their traducers on the ground that, when, as now, the whole world is bent on being examined in every branch of knowledge, time becomes an object of vital importance, and, if only to save this, translations have a distinct value. There are many who wish to know the contents of the ancient classics without being put to the trouble of studying them closely in the original language; indeed, the number of those who will have leisure in the future to study these great masterpieces is only too likely to become even smaller than now as the pressure of examinations and the range of prescribed subjects becomes daily larger; if, then, a translation can, in however an imperfect way, serve to keep alive an admiration for the models of antiquity, it will not have been undertaken in vain.

The form that any translation should assume is a point on which few persons hold identically the same opinion. It is a matter for individual taste. As far as I am concerned, this knotty point has been decided for me by my publishers, who have therefore saved me the trouble of weighing conflicting claims.

A prose version having been essayed, I have endeavoured to produce one, which should combine, as far as the different

idioms of the two languages permit, an accurate rendering of the Greek text with some elegance of expression. How far the execution falls short of the conception I am only too painfully conscious. To be literal and at the same time literary is a high goal to aim at ; and it is to be feared that in all attempts of this kind, the *amari aliquid* will rise both for reader and writer. Still it will not be wholly in vain, if by means of a translation, imperfect as this will doubtless appear to many more competent to produce one than the present writer, anything is contributed to the wider study of one concerning whom a brother poet and dramatist once wrote : "a poet whom Socrates called his friend, whom Aristotle lauded, whom Menander admired, and for whom Sophocles and the city of Athens put on mourning on hearing of his death, must certainly have been something." (Quoted from Goethe by John Addington Symonds in his "Studies of the Greek Poets," 1st series, p. 242.)

A SHORT MEMOIR OF EURIPIDES.

AS with so many other authors of classical antiquity, considerable obscurity veils the details of Euripides' life; nor is it easy in the case of a dramatist, to gather from chance utterances, spoken in character, the real sentiments of the writer on any particular subject.

It is true that, apart from the numerous unfounded scandals and legends which invariably surround any person of eminence, certain broad facts regarding his life stand out with tolerable clearness; but, for the rest, we are thrown back upon conjecture based upon the weak evidence of later writers or the gossip and undisguised malice of contemporary opponents.

Taking, first, the few details which are regarded as tolerably certain, we are informed that he was born in B.C. 480, on the very day of the battle of Salamis, and in the island itself, though others place his birth five years earlier. His parents must have been wealthy people, and not improbably of some rank, for their son was not only able to attend the expensive lectures of Prodicus, Anaxagoras, and other famous sophists and teachers of the day, but also held in his youth certain offices, for which none but the nobly born seem to have been eligible. As for the scandalous attacks and ribald jests of the comic poets of the period regarding his mother and her antecedents, the evidence of their having any foundation in fact is so very slight that we may dismiss them without serious consideration. The legend, for in-

stance, which makes the poet's mother a seller of herbs and not a very honest women either, no doubt served Aristophanes for many a good joke at his enemy's expense; but it should be borne in mind that this brilliant caricaturist's avowed object was to depreciate Euripides, and he certainly was not very careful what use he made of current scandal and perverted truth, so long as he could raise a laugh and amuse his audience. Similarly, too, the stories which make Euripides a man of dissolute habits, given up to vice and pursuing it throughout his life till it led him to a violent end, will be found, on examination, to rest on the flimsiest evidence, and probably originated in the prurient imagination of his numerous enemies or of readers who either misunderstood their author or too rashly inferred that they had found a key to his character in some isolated passage, considered without reference to its context.

Passing to better authenticated facts, it is recorded that the poet's father had him trained with extreme care to contend in the footrace at Olympia, but that after winning two prizes at less important games, he was rejected at Olympia on account of some technical difficulty connected with his age. From his own bitter remarks on the subject of athletes and their habits in some interesting fragments of a play, entitled "Autolycus," we may fairly infer that he carried away no very pleasant memories of that epoch in his life. Further, we learn that he applied himself to painting and sculpture, in the first of which arts he must have attained considerable proficiency, for pictures of his were exhibited at Megara many years after his death, and there are frequent allusions in his plays pointing to an intimate and appreciative acquaintance with this subject.

He was twice married, each time, it is said, unhappily; some indeed have gone so far as to refer the constant diatribes and sneers in his plays against women to his own personal experiences, forgetting perhaps, in their eagerness to

advance this theory, that the poet has quite as frequently drawn female characters of almost ideal tenderness, devotion, and beauty. Of the three sons born to him, the youngest, called after his father, produced his last plays, and was himself also a dramatist by profession.

Late in life Euripides retired from Athens to Magnesia, and finally accepted the invitation of Archelaus, King of Macedon, to his court, then a home for men of letters and savants of all kinds. Here his genius speedily advanced him to royal favour, and it is even said that he was called in to give his advice at the monarch's council-table. Possibly the distinction, with which he was treated, excited the jealousy of rival court poets, for there is a story current that he met his death from the bites of dogs set upon him by his enemies as he was going to keep an assignation. This wild story no doubt may have arisen from a confusion between the poet and the plot of his last play, "The Bacchæ," in which Pentheus is torn to pieces by infuriated women. But it is interesting both as showing the sort of calumny with which vulgar scandal will assail the great, and also as pointing to the state of feeling which must have existed for such an idle tale to originate at all. On his death in B.C. 406, he was buried with great pomp at Pella, the Macedonian capital, in spite of the request of his countrymen that his remains might be sent to Athens.

Such are the few meagre details we are able to collect from reliable authorities of the poet's life. From his own writings and from somewhat doubtful sources a little more has been conjecturally assumed. Thus we are told, with great probability, that he was the friend of Pericles, of Socrates, and Alcibiades, and that his friendship with the two latter caused him to leave his native city rather than risk the chance of incurring the odium and unpopularity which eventually brought them to their deaths. Legend, busy on this point as on others, has set down his retire-

ment into Magnesia to the irritation caused him by the merciless satire of Aristophanes on the poet's unhappy experiences of married life, and it is unfortunately only too likely that one who could make capital out of the death of the man he disliked, would not hesitate to pour out his venomous abuse on domestic scenes which modern decency prefers to regard as sacred.

Born, as Euripides was, some time between B.C. 490 and 480, and dying in B.C. 406, his life comprised the whole brilliant period of Athenian supremacy. Thus he would have witnessed the successive steps by which Athens attained in a short time a pinnacle of material prosperity and artistic glory never reached before or after by any other state in Hellas; he would have admired the masterly organization of the Delian Confederacy, have shared in the varied splendours and triumphs of the age of Pericles, rejoiced at the victories of Cimon, watched the successful schemes of Athenian colonization, and followed with attentive eye the many phases of that long and disastrous war, which brought such suffering on his countrymen, and finally left his city ruined and humbled at the feet of Sparta. Amongst the circle of his acquaintance he might have counted poets, painters, sculptors, historians, and philosophers, whose productions are still the wonder of the world and the despair of modern imitators.

Indeed, to know any one character of that great period thoroughly it is necessary to know something of them all, and only in this way can one hope to find the right starting-point for a proper appreciation of this many-sided poet, and to see how far he influenced and how far he was influenced by his environment.

Euripides produced his first play, the "Peliades," in B.C. 455, a year after the death of Æschylus; it obtained the third prize, but considering the poet's age and the rivals he probably had to meet, this is no evidence

of inferior work. Having once started it is probable that he brought out tetralogies at regular intervals, till in B.C. 441 he attained the coveted distinction and won the first prize, but the names of his plays on this occasion have not been identified. Thrice again was he proclaimed victor, on the last occasion with plays that appeared after his death. This small measure of immediate success may at first sight appear strange, for we know that he was a prolific writer, some seventy-five or even ninety-two plays being attributed to him.

But the reason is not really far to seek. He was not the advocate of any party; for though he was inclined towards a war-like policy, and entertained a lively hatred of Sparta and things Spartan, yet he was equally ready to point out to Athens her mistakes and the inevitable consequences of her follies. Such a man was not likely to please the judges of his day, who almost inevitably must have been influenced by party considerations; and so others, who abstained from politics altogether in their compositions, or consistently supported one side, stepped in to carry off the prize which "the great outsider," as Mahaffy so aptly calls him, must often on his merits and in accordance with the judgment of posterity have better deserved. Nor, again, was Euripides, strictly speaking, a public man, that is, in the sense of keeping himself before the people; doubtless he was well versed in all that went on around him, as indeed is abundantly proved by his writings; but he did not mix much with his fellows in the way, for example, that his friend Socrates did; his mind was more purely speculative; the quiet of his study was therefore more congenial to him than the noise of the market-place, and the silent perusal of his books than the wordy warfare of the law-courts.

In all the great social problems of the day he took a deep interest, and passages abound in his plays proving

how thoroughly he had mastered some of them and how far in advance of his age he had gone in his efforts to arrive at the solution of others. The treatment of slaves, the relations of women towards the other sex, the popular theology, new discoveries in science,—these are only a few of the questions which occupied his thoughts and attracted his cosmopolitan sympathies.

Living, as he did, in the age of the Sophists, an age of daring speculation and unbounded scepticism, when old beliefs were giving way to new theories, it is not strange that Euripides was affected by the movement, and that the influence of sophistic teaching is everywhere discernible in his pages. In no writer of the period is the spirit of this new learning more clearly mirrored; never before were conventional methods treated with such scant respect; and this it is which roused the apprehensions of the more conservative Aristophanes, and threw him into such violent opposition to this new-fangled poet—opposition, which, after all, was doomed to fall powerless before overmastering genius.

A certain melancholy pervades all the poetry of Euripides. Whether, as some say, he was naturally morose, or whether his experiences soured his disposition, we have no means of deciding now. The ceaseless rancour of malevolent foes, the despair that at length drags down a man who is persistently and purposely misunderstood, the fate of his best friends, the sad contrast of the closing years of the Peloponnesian War to its early promise, his own domestic troubles—all these causes may well have succeeded in inspiring him with that gloomy view of life which is reflected so deeply in his writings.

To enter into any examination of the exaggerated attacks made on the poet by his detractors, ancient and modern, would be too long a subject in so brief a memoir, even had it not been already most ably treated by Professor Mahaffy

in his little volume on "Euripides"; two remarks from which I take the liberty of quoting. Speaking of the atheism laid to Euripides' charge, he says:

"The only declared atheist in his extant plays is the brutal and ignorant Cyclops, whose coarse and sensual unbelief is surely intended for a keen satire on such vulgarity in speculation."

In another passage, after discussing the rival views that have prevailed about our poet, and the anomalies and contradictions of his character which make it so easy to blame, so hard to understand his many-sidedness, he concludes:

"We must combine all these portraits with their contradictions to obtain an adequate idea of that infinitely various, unequal, suggestive mind, which was at the same time practically shrewd and mystically vague, clear in expression but doubtful in thought, morose in intercourse and yet a profound lover of mankind, drawing ideal women and yet perpetually sneering at the sex, doubting the gods and yet reverencing their providence, above his age and yet not above it, stooping to the interests of the moment and yet missing the reward of momentary fame, despairing of future life and yet revolving problems which owe all their interest to the very fact that they are perpetual."

Euripides is the last of the Greek tragedians properly so called. "The sure sign of the general decline of an art," says Macaulay, "is the frequent occurrence, not of deformity, but of misplaced beauty." How hard this criticism hits Euripides must be obvious to all who are familiar with his choral odes. Many of the most beautiful of these have no direct connection with the plot of the play in which they occur; they might be introduced with equal propriety elsewhere; they are exquisite hymns, and, as such, often recommend a poor play; but they are irrelevant and out of place.

In spite, however, of all that was said and written against

him, the great fact remains that he was by far the most popular of all the tragedians. He appealed directly to men's hearts; as Aristotle said of him, he represented men as they are, not as they ought to be; and if he thereby lost in dignity, he yet gained by being able to extend a wider sympathy to the sufferings of his fellow-men. And this no doubt will explain much that has been most bitterly blamed in his method; it is said that he vulgarized tragedy, bringing it down to the level of melodrama with his excessive love of pathos, his reliance on striking scenery and novelties in music to create an effect, his rhetorical subtlety and exaggerated patriotism; but an unerring insight had taught how he could best reach his audience, and this was enough for him. The sentiment expressed by Terence many years later might very well have issued from the lips of Euripides: "Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto."

RHESUS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CHORUS OF TROJAN SENTINELS.
HECTOR.
ÆNEAS.
DOLON.
A MESSENGER (*a Shepherd*).
RHESUS.
ODYSSEUS
DIOMEDES.
PARIS.
ATHENA.
THE MUSE.
THE CHARIOTEER OF RHESUS.

SCENE.—Before Hector's tent at the gates of Troy.

CHO. To Hector's couch away, one of you wakeful squires that tend the prince, to see if he have any fresh tidings from the warriors who were set to guard the assembled host during the fourth watch of the night. (*Calls to* HECTOR *in the tent.*) Lift up thy head! Prop thine arm beneath it! Unseal that louring eye from its repose; thy lowly couch of scattered leaves, O Hector, quit! 'Tis time to hearken.

HEC. Who goes there? Is it a friend who calls? Who art thou? Thy watchword? Speak! Who in the dark hours comes nigh my couch, must tell me who he is.

CHO. Sentinels we of the army.

HEC. Why this tumultuous haste?

CHO. Be of good courage.

HEC. Is there some midnight ambuscade?

CHO. Nay.

HEC. Then why dost thou desert thy post and rouse the army, save thou have some tidings of the night? Art not aware how near the Argive host we take our night's repose in all our harness clad?

CHO. To arms! O Hector, seek thine allies' sleeping camp! Bid them wield the spear! Awake them! To thine own company despatch a friend. Saddle and bridle the steeds. Who will to the son of Panthus? who to Europa's son, captain of the Lycian band? Where are they who should inspect the victims? Where be the leaders of the light-armed troops? Ye Phrygian archers, string your horn-tipped bows.

HEC. Now fear, now confidence thy tidings inspire; nothing is plainly set forth. Can it be that thou art smitten with wild affright by Pan, the son of Cronion, and leaving thy watch therefore dost rouse the host? What means thy noisy summons? What tidings can I say thou bringest? Thy words are many, but no plain statement hast thou made.

CHO. The long night through, O Hector, the Argive host hath kindled fires, and bright with torches shines the anchored fleet. To Agamemnon's tent the whole army moves clamorously by night, eager for fresh orders maybe, for never before have I seen such commotion among yon sea-faring folk. Wherefore I was suspicious of what might happen and came to tell thee, that thou mayest have no cause to blame me hereafter.

HEC. In good season com'st thou, albeit thy tidings are fraught with terror; for those cowards are bent on giving me the slip and stealing away from this land in their ships by night; their midnight signalling convinces me of this. Ah! Fortune, to rob me in my hour of triumph, a lion of his prey, or ever this spear of mine with one fell swoop had made an end for aye of yonder Argive host! Yea, had not the sun's bright lamp withheld his light, I had not stayed my victor's spear, ere I had fired their ships and made my way from tent to tent, drenching this hand in Achæan gore. Right eager was I to make a night attack and take advantage of the stroke of luck by heaven sent, but those wise seers of mine, who have heaven's will so pat, persuaded me to wait the dawn, and then leave not one Achæan in the land. But those others await not the counsels of my soothsayers; darkness turns runaways to heroes. Needs must we now without delay pass this word along the line "Arm, arm! from slumber cease!" for many a man of them, e'en as he leaps aboard his ship, shall be smitten through the back and sprinkle the ladders with blood, and others shall be fast bound with cords and learn to till our Phrygian glebe.

Cho. Thou hastest, Hector, before thou knowest clearly what is happening; for we do not know for certain whether our foes are flying.

Hec. What reason else had the Argive host to kindle fires?

Cho. I cannot say; my soul doth much misgive me.

Hec. If this thou fearest, be sure there's nought thou wouldst not fear.

Cho. Never aforetime did the enemy kindle such a blaze.

Hec. No, nor ever before did they suffer such shameful defeat and rout.

Cho. This thou didst achieve; look now to what remains to do.

Hec. I have but one word to say, "Arm, arm against the foe!"

Cho. Lo! where Æneas comes, in hot haste too, as though he hath news to tell his friends.

Æn. Why, Hector, have the sentinels in terror made their way through the host to thy couch to hold a midnight conclave and disturb the army?

Hec. Case thee in thy coat of mail, Æneas.

Æn. How now? are tidings come of some secret stratagem set on foot during the night by the foe?

Hec. They are flying, these foes of ours, and going aboard their ships.

Æn. What sure proof canst thou give of this?

Hec. The livelong night they are kindling blazing torches; methinks they will not wait for the morrow, but after lighting brands upon their ships' decks will leave this land and fly to their homes.

Æn. And thou, wherefore dost thou gird thee with thy sword?

Hec. With my spear will I stop them even as they fly and leap aboard their ships, and my hand shall be heavy upon them; for shameful it were in us, aye, and cowardly as well

as shameful, when God gives them into our hands, to let our foes escape without a blow after all the injuries they have done us.

ÆN. Would thou wert as sage as thou art bold! But lo! among mortals the same man is not dowered by nature with universal knowledge; each hath his special gift appointed him, thine is arms, another's is sage counsel. Thou hearest their torches are blazing, and art fired with the hope that the Achæans are flying, and wouldst lead on our troops across the trenches in the calm still night. Now after crossing the deep yawning trench, supposing thou shouldst find the enemy are not flying from the land, but are awaiting thy onset, beware lest thou suffer defeat and so never reach this city again; for how wilt thou pass the palisades in a rout? And how shall thy charioteers cross the bridges without dashing the axles of their cars to pieces? And, if victorious, thou hast next the son of Peleus to engage; he will ne'er suffer thee to cast the firebrand on the fleet, no, nor to harry the Achæans as thou dost fondly fancy. Nay, for yon man is fierce as fire, a very tower of valiancy. Let us rather then leave our men to sleep calmly under arms after the weariness of battle, while we send, as I advise, whoe'er will volunteer, to spy upon the enemy; and if they really are preparing to fly, let us arise and fall upon the Argive host, but if this signalling is a trap to catch us, we shall discover from the spy the enemy's designs and take our measures; such is my advice, O King.

CHO. It likes me well; so change thy mind and adopt this counsel. I love not hazardous commands in generals. What better scheme could be than for a fleet spy to approach the ships and learn why our foes are lighting fires in front of their naval station?

HEC. Since this finds favour with you all, prevail. (*To* ÆNEAS.) Go thou and marshal our allies; mayhap the host hearing of our midnight council is disturbed. Mine shall it

be to send one forth to spy upon the foe. And if I discover any plot amongst them, thou shalt fully hear thereof, and at the council-board shalt learn our will; but in case they be starting off in flight, with eager ear await the trumpet's call, for then I will not stay, but will this very night engage the Argive host there where their ships are hauled up.

ÆN. Send out the spy forthwith; there's safety in thy counsels now. And thou shalt find me steadfast at thy side, whene'er occasion call.

HEC. What Trojan now of all our company doth volunteer to go and spy the Argive fleet? Who will be that patriot? Who saith 'I will?' Myself cannot at every point serve my country and my friends in arms.

DOL. I for my country will gladly run this risk and go to spy the Argive fleet, and when I have learnt fully all that the Achæans plot I will return. Hear the conditions on which I undertake this toil.

HEC. True to his name in sooth, his country's friend is Dolon. Thy father's house was famed of yore, but thou hast made it doubly so.

DOL. So must I toil, but for my pains a meet reward should I receive. For set a price on any deed, and then and there it gives to it a double grace.

HEC. Yea, that is but fair; I cannot gainsay it. Name any prize for thyself save the sway I bear.

DOL. I covet not thy toilsome sovereignty.

HEC. Well then, marry a daughter of Priam and become my good brother.

DOL. Nay, I care not to wed amongst those beyond my station.

HEC. There's gold, if this thou'lt claim as thy guerdon.

DOL. Gold have I in my home; no sustenance lack I.

HEC. What then is thy desire of all that Ilium stores within her?

DOL. Promise me my gift when thou dost conquer the Achæans.

HEC. I will give it thee; do thou ask anything except the captains of the fleet.

DOL. Slay them; I do not ask thee to keep thy hand off Menelaus.

HEC. Is it the son of Oileus thou wouldst ask me for?

DOL. Ill hands to dig and delve are those mid luxury nursed.

HEC. Whom then of the Achæans wilt thou have alive to hold to ransom?

DOL. I told thee before, my house is stored with gold.

HEC. Why then, thou shalt come and with thine own hands choose out some spoil.

DOL. Nail up the spoils for the gods on their temple-walls.

HEC. Prithee, what higher prize than these wilt ask me for?

DOL. Achilles' coursers. Needs must the prize be worth the toil when one stakes one's life on Fortune's die.

HEC. Ah! but thy wishes clash with mine anent those steeds; for of immortal stock, they and their sires before them, are those horses that bear the son of Peleus on his headlong course. Them did king Poseidon, ocean's god, break and give to Peleus, so runs the legend—yet, for I did urge thee on, I will not break my word; to thee will I give Achilles' team, to add a splendour to thy house.

DOL. I thank thee; in receiving them I avow I am taking a fairer gift than any other Phrygian for my bravery. Yet thee it needs not to be envious; countless joys besides this will glad thy heart in thy kingship o'er this land.

CHO. Great the enterprise, and great the boon thou designest to receive. Happy, ay, happy wilt thou be, if thou succeed; fair the fame thy toil shall win. Yet to wed with a prince's sister were a distinction high. On Heaven's decrees let Justice keep her eye! what man can give thou hast, it seems, in full.

Dol. Now will I set forth, and going within my house will don such garb as suits, and then will hasten to the Argive fleet.

Cho. Why, what dress in place of this wilt thou assume?

Dol. Such as suits my task and furtive steps.

Cho. One should ever learn wisdom from the wise; tell me wherewith thou wilt drape thy body.

Dol. I will fasten a wolf-skin about my back, and o'er my head put the brute's gaping jaws; then fitting its fore-feet to my hands and its hind-feet to my legs I will go on all-fours in imitation of its gait to puzzle the enemy when I approach their trenches and barriers round the ships. But whenever I come to a deserted spot, on two feet will I walk; such is the ruse I have decided on.

Cho. May Hermes, Maia's child, escort thee safely there and back, prince of tricksters as he is! Thou knowest what thou hast to do; good luck is all thou needest now.

Dol. I shall return in safety, and bring to thee the head of Odysseus when I have slain him, or maybe the son of Tydeus, and with this clear proof before thee thou shalt avow that Dolon went unto the Argive fleet; for, ere the dawn appear, I will win back home with bloodstained hand.

[*Exit* Dolon.

Cho. O Apollo, blest godhead, lord of Thymbra and of Delos, who hauntest thy fane in Lycia, come with all thy archery, appear this night, and by thy guidance save our friend now setting forth, and aid the Dardans' scheme, almighty god whose hands in days of yore upreared Troy's walls! Good luck attend his mission to the ships! may he reach the host of Hellas and spy it out, then turn again and reach the altars of his father's home in Ilium!

Grant him to mount the chariot drawn by Phthia's steeds, when Hector, our master, hath sacked Achæa's camp, those steeds that the sea-god gave to Peleus, son of Æacus; for he and he alone had heart enough for home and country to

go and spy the naval station; his spirit I admire; how few stout hearts there be, when on the sea the sun-light dies and the city labours in the surge; Phrygia yet hath left a valiant few, and bold hearts in the battle's press; 'tis only Mysia's sons who scorn us as allies.[1]

Which of the Achæans will their four-footed murderous foe slay in their beds, as he crosses the ground, feigning to be a beast? May he lay Menelaus low or slay Agamemnon and bring his head to Helen's hands, causing her to lament her evil kinsman, who hath come against my city, against the land of Troy with his countless host of ships.

MES. (*a Shepherd*). Great king, ever in days to come be it mine to bring my masters such news as I am bearing now unto thine ears.

HEC. Full oft the rustic mind is afflicted with dulness; so thou, as like as not, art come to this ill-suited place to tell thy master that his flocks are bearing well. Knowest thou not my palace or my father's throne? Thither thou shouldst carry thy tale when thou hast prospered with thy flocks.

MES. Dull we herdsmen are; I do not gainsay thee. But none the less I bring thee joyful news.

HEC. A truce to thy tale of how the sheep-fold fares; I have battles to fight and spears to wield.

MES. The very things of which I, too, came to tell thee; for a chieftain of a countless host is on his way to join thee as thy friend and to champion this land.

HEC. His country? and the home that he hath left?

MES. His country, Thrace: men call his father Strymon.

HEC. Didst say that Rhesus was setting foot in Troy?

[1] The words ποτὶ Μυσῶν are, as Nauck remarks, probably corrupt, but of the numerous emendations proposed none seem satisfactory. It is just possible that an old proverb is alluded to, branding a Mysian's opinion as worthless—

"Si quis despicatui ducitur, Mysorum ultimus esse dicatur."

Cf. Cicero pro Flacco, ch. xxvii.

MES. Thou hast it; and savest me half my speech.

HEC. How is it that he comes to Ida's meadows, wandering from the broad waggon track across the plain?

MES. I cannot say for certain, though I might guess. To make his entry by night is no idle scheme, when he hears that the plains are packed with foemen's troops. But he frightened us rustic hinds who dwell along the slopes of Ida,[1] the earliest settlement in the land, as he came by night through yon wood where wild beasts couch. On surged the tide of Thracian warriors with loud shouts; whereat in wild amaze we drove our flocks unto the heights, for fear that some Argives were coming to plunder and harry thy steading, till that we caught the sound of voices other than Greek and ceased from our alarm. Then went I and questioned in the Thracian tongue those who were reconnoitring the road, who it was that lead them, and whose he avowed him to be, that came to the city to help the sons of Priam. And when I had heard all I wished to learn, I stood still awhile; and lo! I see Rhesus mounted like a god upon his Thracian chariot. Of gold was the yoke that linked the necks of his steeds whiter than the snow; and on his shoulders flashed his targe with figures welded in gold; while a gorgon of bronze like that which gleams from the ægis of the goddess was bound upon the frontlet of his horses, ringing out its note of fear with many a bell. The number of his host thou couldst not reckon to a sum exact, for it was beyond one's comprehension; many a knight was there, and serried ranks of targeteers, and archers not a few, with countless swarms of light-armed troops, in Thracian garb arrayed, to bear them company. Such the ally who comes to Troy's assistance; him the son of Peleus will ne'er escape or if he fly or meet him spear to spear.

CHO. Whenso the gods stand by the burghers staunch

[1] Cf. Homer, Iliad xx, 216, where he describes Mount Ida as inhabited long before Ilium was built. (Musgrave.)

and true, the tide of fortune glides with easy flow to a successful goal.

HEC. I shall find a host of friends now that fortune smiles upon my warring and Zeus is on my side. But no need have we of those who shared not our toils of erst, what time the War-god, driving all before him, was rending the sails of our ship of state with his tempestuous blast. Rhesus hath shewn the friendship he then bore to Troy; for he cometh to the feast, albeit he was not with the hunters when they took the prey, nor joined his spear with theirs.

CHO. Thou art right to scorn and blame such friends; yet welcome those who fain would help the state.

HEC. Sufficient we who long have kept Ilium safe.

CHO. Art so sure thou hast already caught the foe?

HEC. Quite sure I am; to-morrow's light will make that plain.

CHO. Beware of what may chance; full oft doth fortune veer.

HEC. I loathe the friend who brings his help too late.

MES. O prince, to turn away allies earns hatred. His mere appearing would cause a panic amongst the foe.

CHO. Let him, at least, since he *is* come, approach thy genial board as guest, if not ally, for the gratitude of Priam's sons is forfeit in his case.

HEC. Thou counsellest aright; thou too dost take the proper view. Let Rhesus in his gilded mail join the allies of this land, thanks to the messenger's report.

[*Exit the* Messenger.

CHO. May Nemesis, daughter of Zeus, check the word that may offend; for lo! I will utter all that my soul fain would say. Thou art come, O son of the river god, art come, thrice welcome in thy advent, to the halls of Phrygia; late in time thy Pierian mother and Strymon thy sire, that stream with bridges fair, are sending thee to us,—Strymon who begat thee his strong young son, that day his swirling

waters found a refuge in the tuneful Muse's virgin bosom. Thou art my Zeus, my god of light, as thou comest driving thy dappled steeds. Now, O Phrygia, O my country, now mayst thou by God's grace address thy saviour Zeus! Shall old Troy once more at last spend the live-long day in drinking toasts and singing love's praise, while the wildering wine-cup sends a friendly challenge round, as o'er the sea for Sparta bound, the sons of Atreus quit the Ilian strand? Ah! best of friends, with thy strong arm and spear mayst thou this service do me, then safe return. Come, appear, brandish that shield of gold full in Achilles' face; raise it aslant along the chariot's branching rail, urging on thy steeds the while, and shaking thy lance with double point. For none after facing thee will ever join the dance on the lawns of Argive Hera; no, but he shall die by Thracians slain, and this land shall bear the burden of his corpse and be glad.

Hail, all hail! O mighty prince! fair the scion thou hast bred, O Thrace, a ruler in his every look. Mark his stalwart frame cased in golden corslet! Hark to the ringing bells that peal so proudly from his targe-handle hung. A god, O Troy, a god, a very Ares, a scion of Strymon's stream and of the tuneful Muse, breathes courage into thee.

RHE. Brave son of sire as brave, Hector, prince of this land, all hail! After many a long day I greet thee. Right glad am I of thy success, to see thee camped hard on the foemen's towers; I come to help thee raze their walls and fire their fleet of ships.

HEC. Son of that tuneful mother, one of the Muses nine, and of Thracian Strymon's stream, I ever love to speak plain truth; nature gave me not a double tongue. Long, long ago shouldst thou have come and shared the labours of this land nor suffered Troy for any help of thine to fall o'erthrown by hostile Argive spears. Thou canst not say 'twas any want of invitation that kept thee from coming with thy

help to visit us. How oft came heralds and embassies from Phrygia urgently requiring thine aid for our city? What sumptuous presents did we not send to thee? But thou, brother barbarian though thou wert, didst pledge away to Hellenes us thy barbarian brethren, for all the help thou gavest. Yet 'twas I with this strong arm that raised thee from thy paltry princedom to high lordship over Thrace, that day I fell upon the Thracian chieftains face to face around Pangæus in Pæonia's land and broke their serried ranks, and gave their people up to thee with the yoke upon their necks; but thou hast trampled on this great favour done thee, and comest with laggard step to give thine aid when friends are in distress. While they, whom no natural tie of kin constrains, have long been here, and some are dead and in their graves beneath the heaped-up cairn,—no mean proof of loyalty to the city, and others in harness clad and mounted on their cars, with steadfast soul endure the icy blast and parching heat of the sun, not pledging one another, as thou art wont, in long deep draughts on couches soft. This is the charge I bring against thee and utter to thy face, that thou mayst know how frank is Hector's tongue.

RHE. I too am such another as thyself; straight to the point I cut my way; no shuffling nature mine. My heart was wrung with sorer anguish than ever thine was at my absence from this land; I fumed and chafed, but Scythian folk, whose borders march with mine, made war on me on the very eve of my departure for Ilium; already had I reached the strand of the Euxine sea, there to transport my Thracian army. Then did my spear pour out o'er Scythia's soil great drops of bloody rain, and Thrace too shared in the mingled slaughter. This then was what did chance to keep me from coming to the land of Troy and joining thy standard. But soon as I had conquered these and taken their children as hostages and appointed the yearly tribute they should pay my house, I crossed the firth, and lo!

am here; on foot I traversed all thy borders that remained to pass, not as thou in thy jeers at those carousals of my countrymen hintest, nor sleeping soft in gilded palaces, but amid the frozen hurricanes that vex the Thracian main and the Pæonian shores, learning as I lay awake what suffering is, this soldier's cloak my only wrap. True my coming hath tarried, but yet am I in time; ten long years already hast thou been at the fray, and naught accomplished yet; day in, day out, thou riskest all in this game of war with Argives. While I will be content once to see the sun-god rise, and sack yon towers and fall upon their anchored fleet and slay the Achæans; and on the morrow home from Ilium will I go, at one stroke ending all thy toil. Let none of you lay hand to spear to lift it, for I, for all my late arrival, will with my lance make utter havoc of those vaunting Achæans.

Cho. Joy, joy! sweet champion sent by Zeus! Only may Zeus, throned on high, keep jealousy, resistless foe, from thee for thy presumptuous words! Yon fleet of ships from Argos sent, never brought, nor formerly nor now, among all its warriors a braver than thee; how I wonder will Achilles, how will Aias stand the onset of thy spear? Oh! to live to see that happy day, my prince, that thou mayest wreak vengeance on them, gripping thy lance in thy death-dealing hand!

Rhe. Such exploits am I ready to achieve to atone for my long absence; (with due submission to Nemesis I say this;) then when we have cleared this city of its foes and thou hast chosen out firstfruits for the gods, I fain would march with thee against the Argives' country and coming thither, lay Hellas waste with war, that they in turn may know the taste of ill.

Hec. If thou couldst rid the city of this present curse and restore it to its old security, sure I should feel deep gratitude towards heaven. But as for sacking Argos and the pasture-lands of Hellas, as thou sayest, 'tis no easy task.

RHE. Avow they not that hither came the choicest chiefs of Hellas?

HEC. Aye, and I scorn them not; enough have I to do in driving them away.

RHE. Well, if we slay these, our task is fully done.

HEC. Leave not the present need, nor look to distant schemes.

RHE. Thou art, it seems, content to suffer tamely and make no return.

HEC. I rule an empire wide enough, e'en though I here abide. But on the left wing or the right or in the centre of the allies thou mayst plant thy shield and marshal thy troops.

RHE. Alone will I face the foe, Hector. But if thou art ashamed, after all thy previous toil, to have no share in firing their ships' prows, place me face to face at least with Achilles and his host.

HEC. 'Gainst him thou canst not range thy eager spear.

RHE. Why, 'twas surely said he sailed to Ilium.

HEC. He sailed and is come hither; but he is wroth and takes no part with the other chieftains in the fray.

RHE. Who next to him hath won a name in their host?

HEC. Aias and the son of Tydeus are, I take it, no whit his inferiors; there is Odysseus too, a noisy knave to talk, but bold enough withal, of all men he hath wrought most outrage on this country. For he came by night to Athena's shrine and stole her image and took it to the Argive ships; next he made his way inside our battlements, clad as a vagrant in a beggar's garb, and loudly did he curse the Argives, sent as a spy to Ilium; and then sneaked out again, when he had slain the sentinels and warders at the gate. He is ever to be found lurking in ambush about the altar of Thymbræan Apollo nigh the city. In him we have a troublous pest to wrestle with.

RHE. No brave man deigns to smite his foe in secret, but to meet him face to face. If I can catch this knave alive, who, as thou sayest, skulks in stealthy ambuscade and plots his mischief, I will impale him at the outlet of the gates and set him up for vultures of the air to make their meal upon. This is the death he ought to die, pirate and temple-robber that he is.

HEC. To your quarters now, for night draws on. For thee I will myself point out a spot where thy host can watch this night apart from our array. Our watchword is Phœbus, if haply there be need thereof; hear and mark it well and tell it to the Thracian army. Ye must advance in front of our ranks and keep a watchful guard, and so receive Dolon who went to spy the ships, for he, if safe he is, is even now approaching the camp of Troy.

CHO. Whose watch is it? who relieves me? night's earlier stars are on the wane, and the seven Pleiads mount the sky; athwart the firmament the eagle floats. Rouse ye, why delay? Up from your beds to the watch! See ye not the moon's pale beam? Dawn is near, day is coming, and lo! a star that heralds it.

SEMICHO. Who was told off to the first watch?
The son of Mygdon, whom men call Corœbus.
Who after him?
The Pæonian contingent roused the Cilicians;
And the Mysians us.
Is it not then high time we went and roused the Lycians for the fifth watch, as the lot decided?

CHO. Hark! hark! a sound; 'tis the nightingale,[1] that slew her child, singing where she sits upon her blood-stained

[1] Aedon, daughter of Pandareus, bore but one son, Itylus, to her husband Zethus; envious of his brother Amphion's numerous family, she resolved to slay his eldest son, but by mistake killed her own. Whereupon she besought the gods to end her life, and they changed her into a nightingale.

nest by Simois her piteous plaint, sweet singer of the many trills; already along Ida's slopes they are pasturing the flocks, and o'er the night I catch the shrill pipe's note; sleep on my closing eyelids softly steals, the sweetest sleep that comes at dawn to tired eyes.

SEMICHO. Why doth not our scout draw near, whom Hector sent to spy the fleet?

He is so long away, I have my fears.

Is it possible he hath plunged into a hidden ambush and been slain?

Soon must we know.

My counsel is we go and rouse the Lycians to the fifth watch, as the lot ordained. [*Exit* Semichorus.

Enter DIOMEDES *and* ODYSSEUS *cautiously with drawn swords.*

ODYS. Didst not hear, O Diomedes, the clash of arms? or is it an idle noise that rings in my ears?

DIO. Nay, 'tis the rattle of steel harness on the chariot-rails; me, too, did fear assail, till I perceived 'twas but the clang of horses' chains.

ODYS. Beware thou stumble not upon the guard in the darkness.

DIO. I will take good care how I advance even in this gloom.

ODYS. If however thou shouldst rouse them, dost know their watchword?

DIO. Yea, 'tis "Phœbus;" I heard Dolon use it.

ODYS. Ha! the foe I see have left this bivouac.

DIO. Yet Dolon surely said that here was Hector's couch, against whom this sword of mine is drawn.

ODYS. What can it mean? Is his company withdrawn elsewhere?

DIO. Perhaps to form some stratagem against us.

Odys. Like enough, for Hector now is grown quite bold by reason of his victory.

Dio. What then are we to do, Odysseus? we have not found our man asleep; our hopes are dashed.

Odys. Let us to the fleet with what speed we may. Some god, whiche'er it be that gives him his good luck, is preserving him; 'gainst fate we must not strive.

Dio. Well, we twain must go against Æneas or Paris, most hateful of Phrygians, and with our swords cut off their heads.

Odys. How, pray, in the darkness canst thou find them amid a hostile army, and slay them without risk?

Dio. Yet 'twere base to go unto the Argive ships if we have worked the enemy no harm.

Odys. What! no harm! Have we not slain Dolon who spied upon the anchored fleet, and have we not his spoils safe here? Dost thou expect to sack the entire camp? Be led by me, let us return; and good luck go with us!

Ath. Whither away from the Trojan ranks, with sorrow gnawing at your hearts, because fortune granteth not you twain to slay Hector or Paris? Have ye not heard that Rhesus is come to succour Troy in no mean sort? If he survive this night until to-morrow's dawn, neither Achilles nor Aias, stout spearman, can stay him from utterly destroying the Argive fleet, razing its palisades and carrying the onslaught of his lance far and wide within the gates; slay him, and all is thine; let Hector's sleep alone, nor hope to leave him a weltering trunk; for he shall find death at another hand.

Odys. Queen Athena, 'tis the well-known accent of thy voice I hear; for thou art ever at my side to help me in my toil. Tell us where the warrior lies asleep, in what part of the barbarian army he is stationed.

Ath. Here lies he close at hand, not marshalled with the other troops, but outside the ranks hath Hector given him quarters, till night gives place to day. And nigh him are

tethered his white steeds to his Thracian chariot, easy to see in the darkness; glossy white are they like to the plumage of a river swan. Slay their master and bear them off, a glorious prize to any home, for nowhere else in all the world is such a splendid team to be found.

Odys. Diomedes, either do thou slay the Thracian folk, or leave that to me, while thy care must be the horses.

Dio. I will do the killing, and do thou look to the steeds. For thou art well versed in clever tricks, and hast a ready wit. And 'tis right to allot a man to the work he can best perform.

Ath. Lo! yonder I see Paris coming towards us; he hath heard maybe from the guard a rumour vague that foes are near.

Dio. Are others with him or cometh he alone?

Ath. Alone; to Hector's couch he seems to wend his way, to announce to him that spies are in the camp.

Dio. Ought not he to head the list of slain?

Ath. Thou canst not o'erreach Destiny. And it is not decreed that he should fall by thy hand; but hasten on thy mission of slaughter fore-ordained, while I feigning to be Cypris, his ally, and to aid him in his efforts will answer thy foe with cheating words. Thus much I have told you, but the fated victim knoweth not, nor hath he heard one word, for all he is so near.

Paris. To thee I call, general and brother, Hector! Sleep'st thou? shouldst not thou awake? Some foeman draws anigh our host, or thieves maybe, or spies.

Ath. Courage! lo! Cypris watches o'er thee in gracious mood. Thy warfare is my care, for I do not forget the honour thou once didst me, and I thank thee for thy good service. And now, when the host of Troy is triumphant, am I come bringing to thee a powerful friend, the Thracian child of the Muse, the heavenly songstress, whose father's name is Strymon.

PARIS. Ever unto this city and to me a kind friend art thou, and I am sure that decision I then made conferred upon this city the highest treasure life affords in thy person. I heard a vague report, and so I came, for there prevailed amongst the guard a rumour that Achæan spies are here. One man, that saw them not, saith so, while another, that saw them come, cannot describe them, and so I am on my way to Hector's tent.

ATH. Fear naught; all is quiet in the host, and Hector is gone to assign a sleeping-place to the Thracian army.

PARIS. Thou dost persuade me, and I believe thy words, and will go to guard my post, free of fear.

ATH. Go, for 'tis my pleasure ever to watch thy interests, that so I may see my allies prosperous. Yea, and thou too shalt recognize my zeal. [*Exit* PARIS.

(*To* ODYSSEUS *and* DIOMEDES.) O son of Laertes, I bid you sheathe your whetted swords, ye warriors all too keen; for dead before you lies the Thracian chief, his steeds are captured, but the foe have wind thereof, and are coming forth against you; fly with all speed to the ships' station. Why delay to save your lives when the foemen's storm is just bursting on you?

CHO. On, on! strike, strike, lay on, lay on! deal death in every blow!

SEMICHO. Who goes there?

Look you, that man I mean. There are the thieves who in the gloom disturbed this host. Hither, come hither, every man of you! I have them—I have clutched them fast.

What is the watchword? Whence cam'st thou? Thy country?

ODYS. 'Tis not for thee to know.

SEMICHO.[1] Speak, or thou diest as a vile traitor this day.

[1] In the arrangement of this extremely difficult passage I have

Wilt not the watchword declare, ere my sword finds its way to thy heart?

ODYS. What! hast thou slain Rhesus?

SEMICHO. Nay, I am asking thee about him who came to slay us.

ODYS. Be of good heart, approach.

SEMICHO. Strike every man of you, strike, strike home!

ODYS. Stay, every man of you!

SEMICHO. No, no, lay on!

ODYS. Ah! slay not a friend.

SEMICHO. What is the watchword, then?

ODYS. Phœbus.

SEMICHO. Right! stay every man his spear!
Dost know whither those men are gone?

ODYS. Somewhere here I caught a sight of them.

SEMICHO. Close on their track each man of you, or else must we shout for aid.

ODYS. Nay, 'twere conduct strange to disturb our friends with wild alarms by night.

[*Exeunt* ODYSSEUS *and* DIOMEDES.

CHO. Who was that man who slipped away? Who was he that will loudly boast his daring in escaping me? How shall I catch him now? to whom liken him? the man who came by night with fearless step passing through our ranks and the guard we set. Is he a Thessalian or a dweller in some seacoast town of Locris, or hath he his home amid the scattered islands of the main? Who was he, and whence came he? What is his fatherland? What god doth he avow as lord of all the rest?

SEMICHO. Whose work is this? is it the deed of Odysseus? If one may conjecture from his former acts, of course it is.

followed Paley. There are numerous other ways of assigning the lines, but none of them seem to have greater claims to be correct on the ground of probability.

Dost think so really? Why, of course.

He is a bold foe for us.

Who is? whom art thou praising for valiancy?

Odysseus.

Praise not the crafty weapons that a robber uses.

Cho. Once before he came into this city, with swimming bleary eyes, in rags and tatters clad, his sword hidden in his cloak. And like some vagrant menial he slunk about begging his board, his hair all tousled and matted with filth, and many a bitter curse he uttered against the royal house of the Atreidæ, as though forsooth he were to those chiefs opposed. Would, oh! would he had perished, as was his due, or ever he set foot on Phrygia's soil!

Semicho. Whether it were really Odysseus or not, I am afeard.

Aye surely, for Hector will blame us sentinels.

What can he allege?

He will suspect.

What have we done? why art afeard?

By us did pass—

Well, who?

They who this night came to the Phrygian host.

Cha. O cruel stroke of fate. Woe, woe!

Cho. Hush! be silent all! Crouch low, for maybe there cometh someone into the snare.

Cha. Oh, oh! dire mishap to the Thracian allies.

Cho. Who is he that groans?

Cha. Alack, alack! woe is me and woe is thee, O king of Thrace! How curst the sight of Troy to thee! how sad the blow that closed thy life!

Cho. Who art thou? an ally? which? night's gloom hath dulled these eyes, I cannot clearly recognize thee.

Cha. Where can I find some Trojan chief? Where doth Hector take his rest under arms? Alack and well-a-day!

To which of the captains of the host am I to tell my tale? What sufferings ours! What dark deeds someone hath wrought on us and gone his way, when he had wound up a clew of sorrow manifest to every Thracian!

CHO. From what I gather of this man's words, some calamity, it seems, is befalling the Thracian host.

CHA. Lost is all our host, our prince is dead, slain by a treacherous blow. Woe worth the hour! woe worth the day! O the cruel anguish of this bloody wound that inly racks my frame! Would I were dead! Was it to die this inglorious death that Rhesus and I did come to Troy?

CHO. This is plain language; in no riddles he declares the disaster; all too clearly he asserts our friends' destruction.

CHA. A sorry deed it was, and more than that a deed most foul; yea, 'tis an evil doubly bad; to die with glory, if die one must, is bitterness enough I trow to him who dies; assuredly it is; though to the living it add dignity and honour for their house. But we, like fools, have died a death of shame. No sooner had great Hector given us our quarters and told us the watchword than we laid us down to sleep upon the ground, o'ercome by weariness. No guard our army set to watch by night. Our arms we set not in array, nor were the whips hung ready on the horses' yokes, for our prince was told that you were masters now, and had encamped hard on their ships; so carelessly we threw us down to sleep. Now I with thoughtful mind awoke from my slumber, and with ungrudging hand did measure out the horses' feed, expecting to harness them at dawn unto the fray; when lo! through the thick gloom two men I see roaming around our army. But when I roused myself they fled away, and were gone once more; and I called out to them to keep away from our army, for I thought they might be thieves from our allies. No answer made they, so I too said no more, but came back to my couch and slept again. And lo! as

I slept came a strange fancy o'er me : I saw, methought as in a dream, those steeds that I had groomed and used to drive, stationed at Rhesus' side, with wolves mounted on their backs ; and these with their tails did lash the horses' flanks and urge them on, while they did snort and breathe fury from their nostrils, striving in terror to unseat their riders. Up I sprang to defend the horses from the brutes, for the horror of the night scared me. Then as I raised my head I heard the groans of dying men, and a warm stream of new-shed blood bespattered me where I lay close to my murdered master as he gave up the ghost. To my feet I start, but all unarmed ; and as I peer about and grope to find my sword, a stalwart hand from somewhere nigh dealt me a sword-thrust beneath the ribs. I know the sword that dealt that blow from the deep gaping wound it gave me. Down on my face I fell, while they fled clean away with steeds and chariot. Alack, alack ! Tortured with pain, too weak to stand, a piteous object I ! I know what happened, for I saw it ; but how the victims met their death I cannot say, nor whose the hand that smote them ; but I can well surmise we have our friends to thank for this mischance.

Cho. O charioteer of Thrace's hapless king, never suspect that any but foes have had a hand in this. Lo ! Hector himself is here, apprized of thy mischance ; he sympathizes as he should with thy hard fate.

Hec. Ye villains who have caused this mischief dire, how came the foemen's spies without your knowledge, to your shame, and spread destruction through the host, and you drove them not away as they passed in or out ? Who but you shall pay the penalty for this ? You, I say, were stationed here to guard the host. But they are gone without a wound, with many a scoff at Phrygian cowardice, and at me their leader. Now mark ye this—by father Zeus I swear—at least the scourge, if not the headsman's axe, awaits

such conduct; else count Hector a thing of naught, a mere coward.

Cho. Woe, woe is me! A grievous, grievous woe came on me, I can see, great lord of my city, in the hour that I brought my news to thee that the Argive host was kindling fires about the ships; for by the springs of Simois I vow my eye kept sleepless watch by night, nor did I slumber or sleep. O be not angered with me, my lord; I am guiltless of all; yet if hereafter thou find that I in word or deed have done amiss, bury me alive beneath the earth; I ask no mercy.

Cha. Why threaten these? Why try to undermine my poor barbarian wit by crafty words, barbarian thou thyself? Thou didst this deed; nor they who have suffered all, nor we by wounds disabled will believe it was any other. A long and subtle speech thou'lt need to prove to me thou didst not slay thy friends because thou didst covet the horses, and to gain them didst murder thine own allies, after bidding them come so straitly. They came, and they are dead. Why, Paris found more decent means to shame the rights of hospitality than thou, with thy slaughter of thy allies. Never tell me some Argive came and slaughtered us. Who could have passed the Trojan lines and come against us without detection? Thou and thy Phrygian troops were camped in front of us. Who was wounded, who was slain amongst thy friends, when that foe thou speak'st of came? 'Twas we were wounded, while some have met a sterner fate and said farewell to heaven's light. Briefly, then, no Achæan do I blame. For what enemy could have come and found the lowly bed of Rhesus in the dark, unless some deity were guiding the murderers' steps? They did not so much as know of his arrival. No, 'tis thy plot this!

Hec. 'Tis many a long year now since I have had to do with allies, aye, ever since Achæa's host settled in this land, and never an ill word have I known them say of me;

but with thee I am to make a beginning. Never may such longing for horses seize me that I should slay my friends! This is the work of Odysseus. Who of all the Argives but he would have devised or carried out such a deed? I fear him much; and somewhat my mind misgives me lest he have met and slain Dolon as well; for 'tis long since he set out, nor yet appears.

CHA. I know not this Odysseus of whom thou speakest. 'Twas no foe's hand that smote me.

HEC. Well, keep that opinion for thyself, if it please thee.

CHA. O land of my fathers, would I might die in thee!

HEC. Die! No! Enough are those already dead.

CHA. Where am I to turn, I ask thee, reft of my master now?

HEC. My house shall shelter thee and cure thee of thy hurt.

CHA. How shall murderers' hands care for me?

HEC. This fellow will never have done repeating the same story.

CHA. Curses on the doer of this deed! On thee my tongue doth fix no charge, as thou complainest; but Justice is over all.

HEC. Ho! take him hence! Carry him to my palace and tend him carefully, that he may have no fault to find. And you must go to those upon the walls, to Priam and his aged councillors, and tell them to give orders for the burial of the dead at the place where folk turn from the road to rest.

[Charioteer *is carried off.*

CHO. Why, with what intent doth fortune change and bring Troy once again to mourning after her famous victory? See, see! O look! What goddess, O king, is hovering o'er our heads, bearing in her hands as on a bier the warrior slain but now? I shudder at this sight of woe.

THE MUSE. Behold me, sons of Troy! Lo! I the Muse, one of the sisters nine, that have honour among the wise,

am here, having seen the piteous death his foes have dealt my darling son. Yet shall the crafty Odysseus, that slew him, one day hereafter pay a fitting penalty. O my son, thy mother's grief, I mourn for thee in self-taught strains of woe! What a journey thou didst make to Troy, a very path of woe and sorrow! starting, spite of all my warnings and thy father's earnest prayers, in defiance of us. Woe is me for thee, my dear, dear son! Ah, woe! my son, my son!

Cho. I, too, bewail and mourn thy son, as far as one can who hath no common tie of kin.

The Muse. Curses on the son[1] of Œneus! Curses on Laertes' child! who hath reft me of my fair son and made me childless! and on that woman, too, that left her home in Hellas, and sailed hither with her Phrygian paramour, bringing death to thee, my dearest son, 'neath Ilium's walls, and stripping countless cities of their heroes brave. Deep, deep the wounds, son[2] of Philammon, hast thou inflicted on my heart, in life, nor less in Hades' halls. Yea, for 'twas thy pride, thy own undoing, and thy rivalry with us Muses that made me mother of this poor son of mine. For as I crossed the river's streams I came too nigh to Strymon's fruitful couch, that day we Muses came unto the brow of Mount Pangæus with its soil of gold, with all our music furnished forth for one great trial of minstrel skill with that clever Thracian bard, and him we reft of sight, even Thamyris, the man who oft reviled our craft. Anon, when I gave birth to thee, because I felt shame of my sisters and my maiden years, I sent thee to the swirling stream of thy sire, the water-god; and Strymon did not entrust thy nurture to mortal hands, but to the fountain nymphs. There wert thou

[1] Tydeus, father of Diomedes, was son of Œneus, king of Calydon.

[2] Thamyris, the son of Philammon, challenged the Muses to a musical contest; he was defeated and his eyes put out by them. One result of the Muses' visit was the marriage of Strymon, the river-god, to one of the Muses, followed by the birth of Rhesus.

reared most fairly by the maiden nymphs, and didst rule o'er Thrace, a leader amongst men, my child. So long as thou didst range thy native land in quest of bloody deeds of prowess I feared not for thy death, but I bade thee ne'er set out for Troy-town, for well I knew thy doom; but Hector's messages and those countless embassies urged thee to go and help thy friends. This was thy doing, Athena; thou alone art to blame for his death (neither Odysseus nor the son of Tydeus had aught to do with it); think not it hath escaped mine eye. And yet we sister Muses do special honour to thy city, thy land we chiefly haunt; yea, and Orpheus,[1] own cousin of the dead whom thou hast slain, did for thee unfold those dark mysteries with their torch processions. Musæus, too, thy holy citizen, of all men most advanced in lore, him did Phœbus with us sisters train. And here is my reward for this; dead in my arms I hold my child and mourn for him. Henceforth no other learned man I'll bring to thee.

Cho. Vainly it seems the Thracian charioteer reviled us with plotting this man's murder, Hector.

Hec. I knew it; it needed no seer to say that he had perished by the arts of Odysseus. Now I, when I saw the Hellene host camped in my land, of course would not hesitate to send heralds to my friends, bidding them come and help my country; and so I sent, and he as in duty bound came my toils to share. It grieves me sorely to see him dead; and now am I ready to raise a tomb for him and burn at his pyre great store of fine raiment; for he came as a friend and in sorrow is he going hence.

The Muse. He shall not descend into earth's darksome soil; so earnest a prayer will I address to the bride of the nether world, the daughter of the goddess Demeter, giver of

[1] Orpheus was the son of Œager, king of Thrace, and the Muse Calliope. The following reference is to the so-called Orphic mysteries, in which the torch procession formed a conspicuous feature.

increase, to release his soul, and debtor, as she is to me, show that she honours the friends of Orpheus. Yet from henceforth will he be to me as one dead that seeth not the light; for never again will he meet me or see his mother's face, but will lurk hidden in a cavern of the land with veins of silver, restored to life, no longer man but god, even as the prophet of Bacchus[1] did dwell in a grotto 'neath Pangæus, a god whom his votaries honoured. Lightly now shall I feel the grief of the sea-goddess, for her son[2] too must die. First then for thee we sisters must chaunt our dirge, and then for Achilles when Thetis mourns some day. Him shall not Pallas, thy slayer, save; so true the shaft Loxias keeps in his quiver for him. Ah me! the sorrows that a mother feels! the troubles of mortals! whoso fairly reckons you up will live and die a childless man and will have no children to bury.

Cho. His mother now must see to this her son's burial; but for thee, Hector, if thou wilt carry out any scheme, now is the time, for day is dawning.

Hec. Go, bid our comrades arm at once: yoke the horses; torch in hand ye must await the blast of the Etrurian trumpet; for I hope with this day's mounting sun to pass beyond their lines and walls and fire the ships of the Achæans, restoring freedom's light once more to Troy.

Cho. Obedience to our prince! let us array ourselves in mail, and go forth and these orders tell to our allies, and haply the god who is on our side will grant us victory.

[1] The Thracian Lycurgus, a mythical king whose worship was united in Thrace with that of Bacchus in the orgies amidst the hills.

[2] *i.e.* Achilles, the son of Thetis, who is killed by an arrow of Paris at the siege of Troy.

MEDEA.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

NURSE OF MEDEA.
ATTENDANT ON HER CHILDREN.
MEDEA.
CHORUS OF CORINTHIAN WOMEN.
CREON.
JASON.
ÆGEUS.
MESSENGER.
THE TWO SONS OF JASON AND MEDEA.

SCENE.—Before the Palace of Creon at Corinth.

MEDEA.

NURSE. Ah! would to Heaven the good ship Argo ne'er had sped its course to the Colchian land through the misty blue Symplegades, nor ever in the glens of Pelion the pine been felled to furnish with oars the chieftain's hands, who went to fetch the golden fleece for Pelias; for then would my own mistress Medea never have sailed to the turrets of Iolcos, her soul with love for Jason smitten, nor would she have beguiled the daughters of Pelias to slay their father and come to live here in the land of Corinth with her husband and children, where her exile found favour with the citizens to whose land she had come, and in all things of her own accord was she at one with Jason, the greatest safeguard this when wife and husband do agree; but now their love is all turned to hate, and tenderest ties are weak. For Jason hath betrayed his own children and my mistress dear for the love of a royal bride, for he hath wedded the daughter of Creon, lord of this land. While Medea his hapless wife, thus scorned, appeals to the oaths he swore, recalls the strong pledge his right hand gave, and bids heaven be witness what requital she is finding from Jason. And here she lies fasting, yielding her body to her grief, wasting away in tears ever since she learnt that she was wronged by her husband, never lifting her eye nor raising her face from off the ground; and she lends as deaf an ear to her friend's warning as if she were a rock or ocean billow, save when she turns her snow-white neck aside and softly to herself bemoans her father dear, her country and her home, which

she gave up to come hither with the man who now holds her in dishonour. She, poor lady, hath by sad experience learnt how good a thing it is never to quit one's native land. And she hates her children now and feels no joy at seeing them; I am afeard she may contrive some untoward scheme; for her mood is dangerous nor will she brook her cruel treatment; full well I know her, and I much do dread that she will plunge the keen sword through their heart, stealing without a word into the chamber where their marriage couch is spread, or else that she will slay the prince and bridegroom too, and so find some calamity still more grievous than the present; for dreadful is her wrath, verily the man that doth incur her hate will have no easy task to raise o'er her a song of triumph. Lo! where her sons come hither from their childish sports; little they reck of their mother's woes, for the soul of the young is no friend to sorrow.

ATT. Why dost thou, so long my lady's own handmaid, stand here at the gate alone, loudly lamenting to thyself the piteous tale? how comes it that Medea will have thee leave her to herself?

NURSE. Old man, attendant on the sons of Jason, our masters' fortunes when they go awry make good slaves grieve and touch their hearts. Oh! I have come to such a pitch of grief that there stole a yearning wish upon me to come forth hither and proclaim to heaven and earth my mistress's hard fate.

ATT. What! has not the poor lady ceased yet from her lamentation?

NURSE. Would I were as thou art! the mischief is but now beginning; it has not reached its climax yet.

ATT. O foolish one, if I may call my mistress such a name; how little she recks of evils yet more recent!

NURSE. What mean'st, old man? grudge not to tell me.

ATT. 'Tis naught; I do repent me even of the words I have spoken.

NURSE. Nay, by thy beard I conjure thee, hide it not from thy fellow-slave; I will be silent, if need be, on that text.

ATT. I heard one say, pretending not to listen as I approached the place where our greybeards sit playing draughts[1] near Pirene's sacred spring, that Creon, the ruler of this land, is bent on driving these children and their mother from the boundaries of Corinth; but I know not whether the news is to be relied upon, and would fain it were not.

NURSE. What! will Jason brook such treatment of his sons, even though he be at variance with their mother?

ATT. Old ties give way to new; he bears no longer any love to this family.

NURSE. Undone, it seems, are we, if to old woes fresh ones we add, ere we have drained the former to the dregs.

ATT. Hold thou thy peace, say not a word of this; 'tis no time for our mistress to learn hereof.

NURSE. O children, do ye hear how your father feels towards you? Perdition catch him, but no! he is my master still; yet is he proved a very traitor to his nearest and dearest.

ATT. And who 'mongst men is not? Art learning only now, that every single man cares for himself more than for his neighbour, some from honest motives, others for mere gain's sake? seeing that to indulge his passion their father has ceased to love these children.

NURSE. Go, children, within the house; all will be well. Do thou keep them as far away as may be, and bring them not near their mother in her evil hour. For ere this have I seen her eyeing them savagely, as though she were minded

[1] πεσσούς literally the game itself; here explained by the Scholiast as the place where it was habitually played.

to do them some hurt, and well I know she will not cease from her fury till she have pounced on some victim. At least may she turn her hand against her foes, and not against her friends.

MED. (*within*). Ah, me! a wretched suffering woman I! O would that I could die!

NURSE. 'Tis as I said, my dear children; wild fancies stir your mother's heart, wild fury goads her on. Into the house without delay, come not near her eye, approach her not, beware her savage mood, the fell tempest of her reckless heart. In, in with what speed ye may. For 'tis plain she will soon redouble her fury; that cry is but the herald of the gathering storm-cloud whose lightning soon will flash; what will her proud restless soul, in the anguish of despair, be guilty of? [*Exit* Attendant *with the children.*

MED. (*within*). Ah, me! the agony I have suffered, deep enough to call for these laments! Curse you and your father too, ye children damned, sons of a doomed mother! Ruin seize the whole family!

NURSE. Ah me! ah me! the pity of it! Why, pray, do thy children share their father's crime? Why hatest thou them? Woe is you, poor children, how do I grieve for you lest ye suffer some outrage! Strange are the tempers of princes, and maybe because they seldom have to obey, and mostly lord it over others, change they their moods with difficulty. 'Tis better then to have been trained to live on equal terms. Be it mine to reach old age, not in proud pomp, but in security! Moderation wins the day first as a better word for men to use, and likewise it is far the best course for them to pursue; but greatness that doth o'erreach itself, brings no blessing to mortal men; but pays a penalty of greater ruin whenever fortune is wroth with a family.

CHO. I heard the voice, uplifted loud, of our poor Colchian lady, nor yet is she quiet; speak, aged dame, for as I stood by the house with double gates I heard a voice of

weeping from within, and I do grieve, lady, for the sorrows of this house, for it hath won my love.

NURSE. 'Tis a house no more; all that is passed away long since; a royal bride keeps Jason at her side, while our mistress pines away in her bower, finding no comfort for her soul in aught her friends can say.

MED. (*within*). Oh, oh! Would that Heaven's levin bolt would cleave this head in twain! What gain is life to me? Woe, woe is me! O, to die and win release, quitting this loathed existence!

CHO. Didst hear, O Zeus, thou earth, and thou, O light, the piteous note of woe the hapless wife is uttering? How shall a yearning for that insatiate[1] resting-place ever hasten for thee, poor reckless one, the end that death alone can bring? Never pray for that. And if thy lord prefers a fresh love, be not angered with him for that; Zeus will judge 'twixt thee and him herein. Then mourn not for thy husband's loss too much, nor waste thyself away.

MED. (*within*). Great Themis, and husband[2] of Themis, behold what I am suffering now, though I did bind that accursed one, my husband, by strong oaths to me? O, to see him and his bride some day brought to utter destruction, they and their house with them, for that they presume to wrong me thus unprovoked. O my father, my country, that I have left to my shame, after slaying my own brother.

NURSE. Do ye hear her words, how loudly she adjures Themis, oft invoked, and Zeus, whom men regard as keeper of their oaths? On no mere trifle surely will our mistress spend her rage.

CHO. Would that she would come forth for us to see, and

[1] So MSS. *ἀπλήστου*. Elmsley, whom many editors have followed, proposed *'απλάτου* = "terrible."

[2] *καὶ πότνι' Ἄρτεμι*, corrupt and pointless. The reading here adopted by the translator is *καὶ πόσις, ἄρτι με*, suggested by Munro (Journal of Philology, No. 22, p. 275) *πόσις* = Zeus.

listen to the words of counsel we might give, if haply she might lay aside the fierce fury of her wrath, and her temper stern. Never be my zeal at any rate denied my friends! But go thou and bring her hither outside the house, and tell her this our friendly thought; haste thee ere she do some mischief to those inside the house, for this sorrow of hers is mounting high.

Nurse. This will I do; but I have my doubts whether I shall persuade my mistress; still willingly will I undertake this trouble for you; albeit, she glares upon her servants with the look of a lioness with cubs, whenso anyone draws nigh to speak to her. Wert thou to call the men of old time rude uncultured boors thou wouldst not err, seeing that they devised their hymns for festive occasions, for banquets, and to grace the board, a pleasure to catch the ear, shed o'er our life, but no man hath found a way to allay hated grief by music and the minstrel's varied strain, whence arise slaughters and fell strokes of fate to o'erthrow the homes of men. And yet this were surely a gain, to heal men's wounds by music's spell, but why tune they their idle song where rich banquets are spread? for of itself doth the rich banquet, set before them, afford to men delight.

Cho. I heard a bitter cry of lamentation! loudly, bitterly she calls on the traitor of her marriage bed, her perfidious spouse; by grievous wrongs oppressed she invokes Themis, bride of Zeus, witness of oaths, who brought her unto Hellas, the land that fronts the strand of Asia, o'er the sea by night through ocean's boundless gate.

Med. From the house I have come forth, Corinthian ladies, for fear lest you be blaming me;[1] for well I know that amongst men many by showing pride have gotten them

[1] To extract any satisfactory meaning from this passage, as it stands in our editions, seems an almost impossible task, to judge from the attempts at present made. I have not ventured to alter Paley's text, or

an ill name and a reputation for indifference, both those who shun men's gaze and those who move amid the stranger crowd, and likewise they who choose a quiet walk in life. For there is no just discernment in the eyes of men, for they, or ever they have surely learnt their neighbour's heart, loathe him at first sight, though never wronged by him; and so a stranger most of all should adopt a city's views; nor do I commend that citizen, who, in the stubbornness of his heart, from churlishness resents the city's will.

But on me hath fallen this unforeseen disaster, and sapped my life; ruined I am, and long to resign the boon of existence, kind friends, and die. For he who was all the world to me, as well thou knowest, hath turned out the veriest villain, my own husband. Of all things that have life and sense we women are the most hapless creatures; first must we buy a husband at an exorbitant price, and o'er ourselves a tyrant set which is an evil worse than the first; and herein lies the most important issue, whether our choice be good or bad. For divorce is discreditable to women, nor can we disown our lords. Next must the wife, coming as she does to ways and customs new, since she hath not learnt the lesson in her home, have a diviner's eye to see how best to treat the partner of her life. If haply we perform these tasks with thoroughness and tact, and the husband live with us, without resenting the yoke, our life is a happy one; if not, 'twere best to die. But when a man is vexed with what he finds indoors, he goeth forth and rids his soul of its disgust, betaking him to some friend or comrade of like age; whilst we must needs regard his single self.

And yet they say we live secure at home, while they are at the wars, with their sorry reasoning, for I would gladly take my stand in battle array three times o'er, than once give

proposed interpretation, unsatisfactory as it seems to me. Verrall's emendations, though bold in the extreme, do at least make the Greek intelligible, and to his ingenious note I would refer the curious.

birth. But enough! this language suits not thee as it does me; thou hast a city here, a father's house, some joy in life, and friends to share thy thoughts, but I am destitute, without a city, and therefore scorned by my husband, a captive I from a foreign shore, with no mother, brother, or kinsman in whom to find a new haven of refuge from this calamity. Wherefore this one boon and only this I wish to win from thee,—thy silence, if haply I can some way or means devise to avenge me on my husband for this cruel treatment, and on the man who gave to him his daughter, and on her who is his wife. For though a woman be timorous enough in all else, and as regards courage, a coward at the mere sight of steel, yet in the moment she finds her honour wronged, no heart is filled with deadlier thoughts than hers.

Cho. This will I do; for thou wilt be taking a just vengeance on thy husband, Medea. That thou shouldst mourn thy lot surprises me not. But lo! I see Creon, king of this land coming hither, to announce some new resolve.

Cre. Hark thee, Medea, I bid thee take those sullen looks and angry thoughts against thy husband forth from this land in exile, and with thee take both thy children and that without delay, for I am judge in this sentence, and I will not return unto my house till I banish thee beyond the borders of the land.

Med. Ah, me! now is utter destruction come upon me, unhappy that I am! For my enemies are bearing down on me full sail, nor have I any landing-place to come at in my trouble. Yet for all my wretched plight I will ask thee, Creon, wherefore dost thou drive me from the land?

Cre. I fear thee,—no longer need I veil my dread 'neath words,—lest thou devise against my child some cureless ill. Many things contribute to this fear of mine; thou art a witch by nature, expert in countless sorceries, and thou art

chafing for the loss of thy husband's affection. I hear, too, so they tell me, that thou dost threaten the father of the bride, her husband, and herself with some mischief; wherefore I will take precautions ere our troubles come. For 'tis better for me to incur thy hatred now, lady, than to soften my heart and bitterly repent it hereafter.

MED. Alas! this is not now the first time, but oft before, O Creon, hath my reputation injured me and caused sore mischief. Wherefore whoso is wise in his generation ought never to have his children taught to be too clever; for besides the reputation they get for idleness, they purchase bitter odium from the citizens. For if thou shouldst import new learning amongst dullards, thou will be thought a useless trifler, void of knowledge; while if thy fame in the city o'ertops that of the pretenders to cunning knowledge, thou wilt win their dislike. I too myself share in this ill-luck. Some think me clever and hate me, [others say I am too reserved, and some the very reverse]; [1] others find me hard to please and not so very clever after all. Be that as it may, thou dost fear me lest I bring on thee something to mar thy harmony. Fear me not, Creon, my position scarce is such that I should seek to quarrel with princes. Why should I, for how hast thou injured me? Thou hast betrothed thy daughter where thy fancy prompted thee. No, 'tis my husband I hate, though I doubt not thou hast acted wisely herein. And now I grudge not thy prosperity; betroth thy child, good luck to thee, but let me abide in this land, for though I have been wronged I will be still and yield to my superiors.

CRE. Thy words are soft to hear, but much I dread lest thou art devising some mischief in thy heart, and less than ever do I trust thee now; for a cunning woman, and man likewise, is easier to guard against when quick-tempered

[1] This line is inclosed by most editors in brackets as an interpolation from 808 below, where it is in place.

than when taciturn. Nay, begone at once! speak me no speeches, for this is decreed, nor hast thou any art whereby thou shalt abide amongst us, since thou hatest me.

MED. O, say not so! by thy knees and by thy daughter newly-wed, I do implore!

CRE. Thou wastest words; thou wilt never persuade me.

MED. What, wilt thou banish me, and to my prayers no pity yield?

CRE. I will, for I love not thee above my own family.

MED. O my country! what fond memories I have of thee in this hour!

CRE. Yea, for I myself love my city best of all things save my children.

MED. Ah me! ah me! to mortal man how dread a scourge is love!

CRE. That, I deem, is according to the turn our fortunes take.

MED. O Zeus! let not the author of these my troubles escape thee.

CRE. Begone, thou silly woman, and free me from my toil.

MED. The toil is mine, no lack of it.

CRE. Soon wilt thou be thrust out forcibly by the hand of servants.

MED. Not that, not that, I do entreat thee, Creon!

CRE. Thou wilt cause disturbance yet, it seems.

MED. I will begone; I ask thee not this boon to grant.

CRE. Why then this violence? why dost thou not depart?

MED. Suffer me to abide this single day and devise some plan for the manner of my exile, and means of living for my children, since their father cares not to provide his babes therewith. Then pity them; thou too hast children of thine own; thou needs must have a kindly heart. For my own lot I care naught, though I an exile am, but for those babes I weep, that they should learn what sorrow means.

CRE. Mine is a nature anything but harsh; full oft by showing pity have I suffered shipwreck; and now albeit I clearly see my error, yet shalt thou gain this request, lady; but I do forewarn thee, if to-morrow's rising sun shall find thee and thy children within the borders of this land, thou diest; my word is spoken and it will not lie. So now, if abide thou must, stay this one day only, for in it thou canst not do any of the fearful deeds I dread.

CHO. Ah! poor lady, woe is thee! Alas, for thy sorrows! Whither wilt thou turn? What protection, what home or country to save thee from thy troubles wilt thou find? O Medea, in what a hopeless sea of misery heaven hath plunged thee!

MED. On all sides sorrow pens me in. Who shall gainsay this? But all is not yet lost! think not so. Still are there troubles in store for the new bride, and for her bridegroom no light toil. Dost think I would ever have fawned on yonder man, unless to gain some end or form some scheme? Nay, I would not so much as have spoken to him or touched him with my hand. But he has in folly so far stepped in that, though he might have checked my plot by banishing me from the land, he hath allowed me to abide this day, in which I will lay low in death three of my enemies—a father and his daughter and my husband too. Now, though I have many ways to compass their death, I am not sure, friends, which I am to try first. Shall I set fire to the bridal mansion, or plunge the whetted sword through their hearts, softly stealing into the chamber where their couch is spread? One thing stands in my way. If I am caught making my way into the chamber, intent on my design, I shall be put to death and cause my foes to mock. 'Twere best to take the shortest way—the way we women are most skilled in—by poison to destroy them. Well, well, suppose them dead; what city will receive me? What friendly host will give me a shelter in his land, a home secure, and save my soul alive?

None. So I will wait yet a little while in case some tower of defence rise up for me; then will I proceed to this bloody deed in crafty silence; but if some unexpected mischance drive me forth, I will with mine own hand seize the sword, e'en though I die for it, and slay them, and go forth on my bold path of daring. By that dread queen whom I revere before all others and have chosen to share my task, by Hecate who dwells within my inmost chamber, not one of them shall wound my heart and rue it not. Bitter and sad will I make their marriage for them; bitter shall be the wooing of it, bitter my exile from the land. Up, then, Medea, spare not the secrets of thy art in plotting and devising; on to the danger. Now comes a struggle needing courage. Dost see what thou art suffering? 'Tis not for thee to be a laughing-stock to the race of Sisyphus[1] by reason of this wedding of Jason, sprung, as thou art, from a noble sire, and of the Sun-god's race. Thou hast cunning; and, more than this, we women, though by nature little apt for virtuous deeds, are most expert to fashion any mischief.

Cho. Back to their source the holy rivers turn their tide. Order and the universe are being reversed. 'Tis men whose counsels are treacherous, whose oath by heaven is no longer sure. Rumour shall bring a change o'er my life, bringing it into good repute. Honour's dawn is breaking for woman's sex; no more shall the foul tongue of slander fix upon us. The songs of the poets of old shall cease to make our faithlessness their theme. Phœbus, lord of minstrelsy, hath not implanted in our mind the gift of heavenly song, else had I sung an answering strain to the race of males, for time's long chapter affords many a theme on their sex as well as ours. With mind distraught didst thou thy father's house desert on thy voyage betwixt ocean's twin rocks, and on a foreign strand thou dwellest, thy bed left husbandless, poor lady and

[1] Sisyphus was the founder of the royal house of Corinth.

thou an exile from the land, dishonoured, persecuted. Gone is the grace that oaths once had. Through all the breadth of Hellas honour is found no more; to heaven hath it sped away. For thee no father's house is open, woe is thee! to be a haven from the troublous storm, while o'er thy home is set another queen, the bride that is preferred to thee.

Jas. It is not now I first remark, but oft ere this, how unruly a pest is a harsh temper. For instance, thou, hadst thou but patiently endured the will of thy superiors, mightest have remained here in this land and house, but now for thy idle words wilt thou be banished. Thy words are naught to me. Cease not to call Jason basest of men; but for those words thou hast spoken against our rulers, count it all gain that exile is thy only punishment. I ever tried to check the outbursts of the angry monarch, and would have had thee stay, but thou wouldst not forego thy silly rage, always reviling our rulers, and so thou wilt be banished. Yet even after all this I weary not of my goodwill, but am come with thus much forethought, lady, that thou mayst not be destitute nor want for aught, when, with thy sons, thou art cast out. Many an evil doth exile bring in its train with it; for even though thou hatest me, never will I harbour hard thoughts of thee.

Med. Thou craven villain (for that is the only name my tongue can find for thee, a foul reproach on thy unmanliness)! comest thou to me, thou, most hated foe of gods, of me, and of all mankind? 'Tis no proof of courage or hardihood to confront thy friends after injuring them, but that worst of all human diseases—loss of shame. Yet hast thou done well to come; for I shall ease my soul by reviling thee, and thou wilt be vexed at my recital. I will begin at the very beginning. I saved thy life, as every Hellene knows who sailed with thee aboard the good ship Argo, when thou wert sent to tame and yoke fire-breathing bulls, and to sow the deadly tilth. Yea, and I slew the dragon which guarded the golden fleece, keeping sleepless watch o'er it with many

a wreathed coil, and I raised for thee a beacon of deliver ance. Father and home of my free will I left and came with thee to Iolcos, 'neath Pelion's hills, for my love was stronger than my prudence. Next I caused the death of Pelias by a doom most grievous, even by his own children's hand, beguiling them of all their fear. All this have I done for thee, thou traitor! and thou hast cast me over, taking to thyself another wife, though children have been born to us. Hadst thou been childless still, I could have pardoned thy desire for this new union. Gone is now the trust I put in oaths. I cannot even understand whether thou thinkest that the gods of old no longer rule, or that fresh decrees are now in vogue amongst mankind, for thy conscience must tell thee thou hast not kept faith with me. Ah! poor right hand, which thou didst often grasp. These knees thou didst embrace! All in vain, I suffered a traitor to touch me! How short of my hopes I am fallen! But come, I will deal with thee as though thou wert my friend. Yet what kindness can I expect from one so base as thee? but yet I will do it, for my questioning will show thee yet more base. Whither can I turn me now? to my father's house, to my own country, which I for thee deserted to come hither? to the hapless daughters of Pelias? A glad welcome, I trow, would they give me in their home, whose father's death I compassed! My case stands even thus: I am become the bitter foe to those of mine own home, and those whom I need ne'er have wronged I have made mine enemies to pleasure thee. Wherefore to reward me for this thou hast made me doubly blest in the eyes of many a wife in Hellas; and in thee I own a peerless, trusty lord. O woe is me, if indeed I am to be cast forth an exile from the land, without one friend; one lone woman with her babes forlorn! Yea, a fine reproach to thee in thy bridal hour, that thy children and the wife who saved thy life are beggars and vagabonds! O Zeus! why hast thou granted unto man clear signs to know the sham in

gold, while on man's brow no brand is stamped whereby to gauge the villain's heart?

Cho. There is a something terrible and past all cure, when quarrels arise 'twixt those who are near and dear.

Jas. Needs must I now, it seems, turn orator, and, like a good helmsman on a ship with close-reefed sails, weather that wearisome tongue of thine. Now, I believe, since thou wilt exaggerate thy favours, that to Cypris alone of gods or men I owe the safety of my voyage. Thou hast a subtle wit enough; yet were it a hateful thing for me to say that the Love-god constrained thee by his resistless shaft to save my life. However, I will not reckon this too nicely; 'twas kindly done, however thou didst serve me. Yet for my safety hast thou received more than ever thou gavest, as I will show. First, thou dwellest in Hellas, instead of thy barbarian land, and hast learnt what justice means and how to live by law, not by the dictates of brute force; and all the Hellenes recognize thy cleverness, and thou hast gained a name; whereas, if thou hadst dwelt upon the confines of the earth, no tongue had mentioned thee. Give me no gold within my halls, nor skill to sing a fairer strain than ever Orpheus sang, unless therewith my fame be spread abroad! So much I say to thee about my own toils, for 'twas thou didst challenge me to this retort. As for the taunts thou urgest against my marriage with the princess, I will prove to thee, first, that I am prudent herein, next chastened in my love, and last a powerful friend to thee and to thy sons; only hold thy peace. Since I have here withdrawn from Iolcos with many a hopeless trouble at my back, what happier device could I, an exile, frame than marriage with the daughter of the king? 'Tis not because I loathe thee for my wife—the thought that rankles in thy heart; 'tis not because I am smitten with desire for a new bride, nor yet that I am eager to vie with others in begetting many children, for those we have are quite enough, and I do not complain. Nay, 'tis

that we—and this is most important—may dwell in comfort, instead of suffering want (for well I know that every whilom friend avoids the poor), and that I might rear my sons as doth befit my house; further, that I might be the father of brothers for the children thou hast born, and raise these to the same high rank, uniting the family in one,—to my lasting bliss. Thou, indeed, hast no need of more children, but me it profits to help my present family by that which is to be. Have I miscarried here? Not even thou wouldest say so unless a rival's charms rankled in thy bosom. No, but you women have such strange ideas, that you think all is well so long as your married life runs smooth; but if some mischance occur to ruffle your love, all that was good and lovely erst you reckon as your foes. Yea, men should have begotten children from some other source, no female race existing; thus would no evil ever have fallen on mankind.

Cho. This speech, O Jason, hast thou with specious art arranged; but yet I think—albeit in saying so I betray indiscretion—that thou hast sinned in casting over thy wife.

Med. No doubt I differ from the mass of men on many points; for, to my mind, whoso hath skill to fence with words in an unjust cause, incurs the heaviest penalty; for such an one, confident that he can cast a decent veil of words o'er his injustice, dares to practise it; and yet he is not so very clever after all. So do not thou put forth thy specious pleas and clever words to me now, for one word of mine will lay thee low. Hadst thou not had a villain's heart, thou shouldst have gained my consent, then made this match, instead of hiding it from those who loved thee.

Jas. Thou wouldest have lent me ready aid, no doubt, in this proposal, if I had told thee of my marriage, seeing that not even now canst thou restrain thy soul's hot fury.

Med. This was not what restrained thee; but thine eye was turned towards old age, and a foreign wife began to appear discreditable to thee.

JAS. Be well assured of this: 'twas not for the woman's sake I wedded the king's daughter, my present wife; but, as I have already told thee, I wished to insure thy safety and to be the father of royal sons bound by blood to my own children—a bulwark to our house.

MED. May that prosperity, whose end is woe, ne'er be mine, nor such wealth as would ever sting my heart!

JAS. Change that prayer as I will teach thee, and thou wilt show more wisdom. Never let happiness appear in sorrow's guise, nor, when thy fortune smiles, pretend she frowns!

MED. Mock on; thou hast a place of refuge; I am alone, an exile soon to be.

JAS. Thy own free choice was this; blame no one else.

MED. What did I do? Marry, then betray thee?

JAS. Against the king thou didst invoke an impious curse.

MED. On thy house too maybe I bring the curse.

JAS. Know this, I will no further dispute this point with thee. But, if thou wilt of my fortune somewhat take for the children or thyself to help thy exile, say on; for I am ready to grant it with ungrudging hand, yea and to send tokens to my friends elsewhere who shall treat thee well. If thou refuse this offer, thou wilt do a foolish deed, but if thou cease from anger the greater will be thy gain.

MED. I will have naught to do with friends of thine, naught will I receive of thee, offer it not to me; a villain's gifts can bring no blessing.

JAS. At least I call the gods to witness, that I am ready in all things to serve thee and thy children, but thou dost scorn my favours and thrustest thy friends stubbornly away; wherefore thy lot will be more bitter still.

MED. Away! By love for thy young bride entrapped, too long thou lingerest outside her chamber; go wed, for, if God will, thou shalt have such a marriage as thou wouldst fain refuse.

Cho. When in excess and past all limits Love doth come, he brings not glory or repute to man; but if the Cyprian queen in moderate might approach, no goddess is so full of charm as she. Never, O never, lady mine, discharge at me from thy golden bow a shaft invincible, in passion's venom dipped. On me may chastity, heaven's fairest gift, look[1] with a favouring eye; never may Cypris, goddess dread, fasten on me a temper to dispute, or restless jealousy, smiting my soul with mad desire for unlawful love, but may she hallow peaceful married life and shrewdly decide whom each of us shall wed. O my country, O my own dear home! God grant I may never be an outcast from my city, leading that cruel helpless life, whose every day is misery. Ere that may I this life complete and yield to death, ay, death; for there is no misery that doth surpass the loss of fatherland. I have seen with mine eyes, nor from the lips of others have I the lesson learnt; no city, not one friend doth pity thee in this thine awful woe. May he perish and find no favour, whoso hath not in him honour for his friends, freely unlocking his heart to them. Never shall he be friend of mine.

Æg. All hail, Medea! no man knoweth fairer prelude to the greeting of friends than this.

Med. All hail to thee likewise, Ægeus, son of wise Pandion. Whence comest thou to this land?

Æg. From Phœbus' ancient oracle.

Med. What took thee on thy travels to the prophetic centre of the earth?

Æg. The wish to ask how I might raise up seed unto myself.

Med. Pray tell me, hast thou till now dragged on a childless life?

Æg. I have no child owing to the visitation of some god.

Med. Hast thou a wife, or hast thou never known the married state?

[1] Verrall proposes to read στέγοι "protect," for MSS. στέργοι.

ÆG. I have a wife joined to me in wedlock's bond.

MED. What said Phœbus to thee as to children?

ÆG. Words too subtle for man to comprehend.

MED. Surely I may learn the god's answer?

ÆG. Most assuredly, for it is just thy subtle wit it needs.

MED. What said the god? speak, if I may hear it.

ÆG. He bade me "not loose the wineskin's pendent neck."[1]

MED. Till when? what must thou do first, what country visit?

ÆG. Till I to my native home return.

MED. What object hast thou in sailing to this land?

ÆG. O'er Trœzen's realm is Pittheus king.

MED. Pelops' son, a man devout they say.

ÆG. To him I fain would impart the oracle of the god.

MED. The man is shrewd and versed in such-like lore.

ÆG. Aye, and to me the dearest of all my warrior friends.

MED. Good luck to thee! success to all thy wishes!

ÆG. But why that downcast eye, that wasted cheek?

MED. O Ægeus, my husband has proved a monster of iniquity.

ÆG. What meanest thou? explain to me clearly the cause of thy despondency.

MED. Jason is wronging me though I have given him no cause.

ÆG. What hath he done? tell me more clearly.

MED. He is taking another wife to succeed me as mistress of his house.

ÆG. Can he have brought himself to such a dastard deed?

MED. Be assured thereof; I, whom he loved of yore, am in dishonour now.

ÆG Hath he found a new love? or does he loathe thy bed?

[1] *i.e.*, enjoined strict chastity.

MED. Much in love is he! A traitor to his friend is he become.

ÆG. Enough! if he is a villain as thou sayest.

MED. The alliance he is so much enamoured of is with a princess.

ÆG. Who gives his daughter to him? go on, I pray.

MED. Creon, who is lord of this land of Corinth.

ÆG. Lady, I can well pardon thy grief.

MED. I am undone, and more than that, am banished from the land.

ÆG. By whom? fresh woe this word of thine unfolds.

MED. Creon drives me forth in exile from Corinth.

ÆG. Doth Jason allow it? This too I blame him for.

MED. Not in words, but he will not stand out against it. O, I implore thee by this beard and by thy knees, in suppliant posture, pity, O pity my sorrows; do not see me cast forth forlorn, but receive me in thy country, to a seat within thy halls. So may thy wish by heaven's grace be crowned with a full harvest of offspring, and may thy life close in happiness! Thou knowest not the rare good luck thou findest here, for I will make thy childlessness to cease and cause thee to beget fair issue; so potent are the spells I know.

ÆG. Lady, on many grounds I am most fain to grant thee this thy boon, first for the gods' sake, next for the children whom thou dost promise I shall beget; for in respect of this I am completely lost.[1] 'Tis thus with me; if e'er thou reach my land, I will attempt to champion thee as I am bound to do. Only one warning I do give thee first, lady; I will not from this land bear thee away, yet if of thyself thou reach my halls, there shalt thou bide in safety and I will never yield thee up to any man. But from

[1] The Schol. gives two interpretations of *φροῦδος*. (1) "I am ruined as far as begetting children goes." (2) "I am entirely devoted to doing so." Neither is satisfactory owing to want of parallel passages.

this land escape without my aid, for I have no wish to incur the blame of my allies as well.[1]

MED. It shall be even so; but wouldst thou pledge thy word to this, I should in all be well content with thee.

ÆG. Surely thou dost trust me? or is there aught that troubles thee?

MED. Thee I trust; but Pelias' house and Creon are my foes. Wherefore, if thou art bound by an oath, thou wilt not give[2] me up to them when they come to drag me from the land, but, having entered into a compact and sworn[3] by heaven as well, thou wilt become my friend and disregard their overtures. Weak is any aid of mine, whilst they have wealth and a princely house.

ÆG. Lady, thy words show much foresight, so if this is thy will, I do not refuse. For I shall feel secure and safe if I have some pretext to offer to thy foes, and thy case too the firmer stands. Now name thy gods.

MED. Swear by the plain of Earth, by Helios my father's sire, and, in one comprehensive oath, by all the race of gods.

ÆG. What shall I swear to do, from what refrain? tell me that.

MED. Swear that thou wilt never of thyself expel me from thy land, nor, whilst life is thine, permit any other, one of my foes maybe, to hale me thence if so he will.

[1] *i.e.*, as well as Jason.

[2] To avoid the very doubtful form μεθεῖς = μεθείης some read μεθεῖ' ἂν.

[3] Reading ἐνώμοτος. Hermann changes καὶ into μὴ. A simpler change, supported by a Schol., and one MS., would be to read ἀνώμοτος = "whereas if thou only make a verbal compact, without oath, thou mightest be persuaded," etc. The whole passage is, as it stands, probably corrupt; numerous emendations have been proposed. If the above emendation be adopted, it will be necessary to alter οὐκ ἂν πίθοιο for which Munro proposed ὀκνῶν πίθοιο = "and fearing their demands of surrender thou mightest yield." Wecklein, τάχ' ἂν πίθοι σε (adopted by Nauck), is tempting.

Æg. By earth I swear, by the sun-god's holy beam and by all the host of heaven that I will stand fast to the terms I hear thee make.

Med. 'Tis enough. If thou shouldst break this oath, what curse dost thou invoke upon thyself?

Æg. Whate'er betides the impious.

Med. Go in peace; all is well, and I with what speed I may, will to thy city come, when I have wrought my purpose and obtained my wish.

Cho. May Maia's princely son go with thee on thy way to bring thee to thy home, and mayest thou attain that on which thy soul is set so firmly, for to my mind thou seemest a generous man, O Ægeus.

Med. O Zeus, and Justice, child of Zeus, and sun-god's light, now will I triumph o'er my foes, kind friends; on victory's road have I set forth; good hope have I of wreaking vengeance on those I hate. For where we were in most distress this stranger hath appeared, to be a haven in my counsels; to him will we make fast the cables of our ship when we come to the town and citadel of Pallas. But now will I explain to thee my plans in full; do not expect to hear a pleasant tale. A servant of mine will I to Jason send and crave an interview; then when he comes I will address him with soft words, say, "this pleases me," and, "that is well," [even the marriage with the princess, which my treacherous lord is celebrating, and add "it suits us both, 'twas well thought out"]; [1] then will I entreat that here my children may abide, not that I mean to leave them in a hostile land for foes to flout, but that I may slay the king's daughter by guile. For I will send them with gifts in their hands, carrying them unto the bride to save them from banishment, a robe of finest woof and a chaplet of gold. And if these ornaments she take and put them on, miserably shall she die, and likewise everyone who touches her;

[1] Porson condemns these two lines.

with such fell poisons will I smear my gifts. And here I quit this theme; but I shudder at the deed I must do next; for I will slay the children I have borne; there is none shall take them from my toils; and when I have utterly confounded Jason's house I will leave the land, escaping punishment for my dear children's murder, after my most unholy deed. For I cannot endure the taunts of enemies, kind friends; enough! what gain is life to me? I have no country, home, or refuge left. O, I did wrong, that hour I left my father's home, persuaded by that Hellene's words, who now shall pay the penalty, so help me God. Never shall he see again alive the children I bore to him, nor from his new bride shall he beget issue, for she must die a hideous death, slain by my drugs. Let no one deem me a poor weak woman who sits with folded hands, but of another mould, dangerous to foes and well-disposed to friends; for they win the fairest fame who live their life like me.

CHO. Since thou hast imparted this design to me, I bid thee hold thy hand, both from a wish to serve thee and because I would uphold the laws men make.

MED. It cannot but be so; thy words I pardon since thou art not in the same sorry plight that I am.

CHO. O lady, wilt thou steel thyself to slay thy children twain?

MED. I will, for that will stab my husband to the heart.

CHO. It may, but thou wilt be the saddest wife alive.

MED. No matter; wasted is every word that comes 'twixt now and then. (*To the* Nurse.) Ho! thou, go call me Jason hither, for thee I do employ on every mission of trust. No word divulge of all my purpose, as thou art to thy mistress loyal and likewise of my sex.

CHO. Sons of Erechtheus, heroes happy from of yore, children of the blessed gods, fed on wisdom's glorious food in a holy land ne'er pillaged by its foes, ye who move with sprightly step through a climate ever bright and clear,

where, as legend tells, the Muses nine, Pieria's holy maids, were brought to birth by Harmonia with the golden hair; and poets sing how Cypris drawing water from the streams of fair-flowing Cephissus breathes[1] o'er the land a gentle breeze of balmy winds, and ever as she crowns her tresses with a garland of sweet rose-buds sends forth the Loves to sit by wisdom's side, to take a part in every excellence. How then shall the city of sacred streams, the land that welcomes those it loves, receive thee, the murderess of thy children, thee whose presence with others is a pollution? Think on the murder of thy children, consider the bloody deed thou takest on thee. Nay, by thy knees we, one and all, implore thee, slay not thy babes. Where[2] shall hand or heart find hardihood enough in wreaking such a fearsome deed upon thy sons? How wilt thou look upon thy babes, and still without a tear retain thy bloody purpose? Thou canst not, when they fall at thy feet for mercy, steel thy heart and dip in their blood thy hand.

Jas. I am come at thy bidding, for e'en though thy hate for me is bitter thou shalt not fail in this small boon, but I will hear what new request thou hast to make of me, lady.

Med. Jason, I crave thy pardon for the words I spoke, and well thou mayest brook my burst of passion, for ere now we twain have shared much love. For I have reasoned with my soul and railed upon me thus, "Ah! poor heart! why am I thus distraught, why so angered 'gainst all good advice, why have I come to hate the rulers of the land, my husband too, who does the best for me he can, in wedding with a princess and rearing for my children noble brothers?

[1] Reading χώρας with Reiske. The passage is corrupt, and possibly some word is lost.

[2] Of the numerous emendations of this corrupt passage, Nauck's τέκνων for τέκνοις is the simplest, if it goes far enough. Verrall suggests that a word has fallen out after the second ἦ and conjectures μίνος or τέχναν. This is not less satisfactory than most of the emendations.

Shall I not cease to fret? What possesses me, when heaven its best doth offer? Have I not my children to consider? do I forget that we are fugitives, in need of friends?" When I had thought all this I saw how foolish I had been, how senselessly enraged. So now I do commend thee and think thee most wise in forming this connexion for us; but I was mad, I who should have shared in these designs, helped on thy plans, and lent my aid to bring about the match, only too pleased to wait upon thy bride. But what we are, we are, we women, evil I will not say; wherefore thou shouldst not sink to our sorry level nor with our weapons meet our childishness.

I yield and do confess that I was wrong then, but now have I come to a better mind. Come hither, my children, come, leave the house, step forth, and with me greet and bid farewell to your father, be reconciled from all past bitterness unto your friends, as now your mother is: for we have made a truce and anger is no more.

Enter the Children.

Take his right hand; ah me! my sad fate! when I reflect, as now, upon the hidden future. O my children, since there awaits you even thus a long, long life, stretch forth the hand to take a fond farewell. Ah me! how new[1] to tears am I, how full of fear! For now that I have at last released me from my quarrel with your father, I let the tear-drops stream adown my tender cheek.

Cho. From my eyes too bursts forth the copious tear; O, may no greater ill than the present e'er befall!

Jas. Lady, I praise this conduct, not that I blame what is past; for it is but natural to the female sex to vent their spleen against a husband when he trafficks in other marriages

[1] *ἀρτίδακρυς*. The Schol. explains this word as "ready to shed tears," but *ἄρτι*, as Mr. Evelyn Abbott points out, can scarcely bear such a meaning. (Cf., in Heberden's edition of the Medea, his note.)

besides his own.[1] But thy heart is changed to wiser schemes and thou art determined on the better course, late though it be; this is acting like a woman of sober sense. And for you, my sons, hath your father provided with all good heed a sure refuge, by God's grace; for ye, I trow, shall with your brothers share hereafter the foremost rank in this Corinthian realm. Only grow up, for all the rest your sire and whoso of the gods is kind to us is bringing to pass. May I see you reach man's full estate, high o'er the heads of those I hate! But thou, lady, why with fresh tears dost thou thine eyelids wet, turning away thy wan cheek, with no welcome for these my happy tidings?

MED. 'Tis naught; upon these children my thoughts were turned.

JAS. Then take heart; for I will see that it is well with them.

MED. I will do so; nor will I doubt thy word; woman is a weak creature, ever given to tears.

JAS. Why prithee, unhappy one, dost moan o'er these children?

MED. I gave them birth; and when thou didst pray long life for them, pity entered into my soul to think that these things must be. But the reason of thy coming hither to speak with me is partly told, the rest will I now mention. Since it is the pleasure of the rulers of the land to banish me, and well I know 'twere best for me to stand not in the way of thee or of the rulers by dwelling here, enemy as I am thought unto their house, forth from this land in exile am I going, but these children,—that they may know thy fostering hand, beg Creon to remit their banishment.

JAS. I doubt whether I can persuade him, yet must I attempt it.

[1] *i.e.*, ἀλλοίους. This word is not elsewhere used in tragedy, and has therefore been suspected. Heimsoethius conjectures παμεμπολῶι τε δευτέρους, Dindorf δώμασιν.

MED. At least do thou bid thy wife ask her sire this boon, to remit the exile of the children from this land.

JAS. Yea, that will I; and her methinks I shall persuade, since she is a woman like the rest.

MED. I too will aid thee in this task, for by the children's hand I will send to her gifts that far surpass in beauty, I well know, aught that now is seen 'mongst men, a robe of finest tissue and a chaplet of chased gold. But one of my attendants must haste and bring the ornaments hither. Happy shall she be not once alone but ten thousandfold, for in thee she wins the noblest soul to share her love, and gets these gifts as well which on a day my father's sire, the Sun-god, bestowed on his descendants. My children, take in your hands these wedding gifts, and bear them as an offering to the royal maid, the happy bride; for verily the gifts she shall receive are not to be scorned.

JAS. But why so rashly rob thyself of these gifts? Dost think a royal palace wants for robes or gold? Keep them, nor give them to another. For well I know that if my lady hold me in esteem, she will set my price above all wealth.

MED. Say not so; 'tis said that gifts tempt even gods; and o'er men's minds gold holds more potent sway than countless words. Fortune smiles upon thy bride, and heaven now doth swell her triumph; youth is hers and princely power; yet to save my children from exile I would barter life, not dross alone. Children, when ye are come to the rich palace, pray your father's new bride, my mistress, with suppliant voice to save you from exile, offering her these ornaments the while; for it is most needful that she receive the gifts in her own hand. Now go and linger not; may ye succeed and to your mother bring back the glad tidings she fain would hear!

CHO. Gone, gone is every hope I had that the children yet might live; forth to their doom they now proceed. The hapless bride will take, ay, take the golden crown that is to

be her ruin; with her own hand will she lift and place upon her golden locks the garniture of death. Its grace and sheen divine will tempt her to put on the robe and crown of gold, and in that act will she deck herself to be a bride amid the dead. Such is the snare whereinto she will fall, such is the deadly doom that waits the hapless maid, nor shall she from the curse escape. And thou, poor wretch, who to thy sorrow art wedding a king's daughter, little thinkest of the doom thou art bringing on thy children's life, or of the cruel death that waits thy bride.

Woe is thee! how art thou fallen from thy high estate!

Next do I bewail thy sorrows, O mother hapless in thy children, thou who wilt slay thy babes because thou hast a rival, the babes thy husband hath deserted impiously to join him to another bride.

ATT. Thy children, lady, are from exile freed, and gladly did the royal bride accept thy gifts in her own hands, and so thy children made their peace with her.

MED. Ah!

ATT. Why art so disquieted in thy prosperous hour? Why turnest thou thy cheek away, and hast no welcome for my glad news?

MED. Ah me!

ATT. These groans but ill accord with the news I bring.

MED. Ah me! once more I say.

ATT. Have I unwittingly announced some evil tidings? Have I erred in thinking my news was good?

MED. Thy news is as it is; I blame thee not.

ATT. Then why this downcast eye, these floods of tears?

MED. Old friend, needs must I weep; for the gods and I with fell intent devised these schemes.

ATT. Be of good cheer; thou too of a surety shalt by thy sons yet be brought home again.

MED. Ere that shall I bring others to their home, ah! woe is me!

ATT. Thou art not the only mother from thy children reft. Bear patiently thy troubles as a mortal must.

MED. I will obey; go thou within the house and make the day's provision for the children. O my babes, my babes, ye have still a city and a home, where far from me and my sad lot you will live your lives, reft of your mother for ever; while I must to another land in banishment, or ever I have had my joy of you, or lived to see you happy, or ever I have graced your marriage couch, your bride, your bridal bower, or lifted high the wedding torch. Ah me! a victim of my own self-will. So it was all in vain I reared you, O my sons; in vain did suffer, racked with anguish, enduring the cruel pangs of childbirth. 'Fore Heaven I once had hope, poor me! high hope of ye that you would nurse me in my age and deck my corpse with loving hands, a boon we mortals covet; but now is my sweet fancy dead and gone; for I must lose you both and in bitterness and sorrow drag through life. And ye shall never with fond eyes see your mother more, for o'er your life there comes a change. Ah me! ah me! why do ye look at me so, my children? why smile that last sweet smile? Ah me! what am I to do? My heart gives way when I behold my children's laughing eyes. O, I cannot; farewell to all my former schemes; I will take the children from the land, the babes I bore. Why should I wound their sire by wounding them, and get me a twofold measure of sorrow? No, no, I will not do it. Farewell my scheming! And yet what am I coming to? Can I consent to let those foes of mine escape from punishment, and incur their mockery? I must face this deed. Out upon my craven heart! to think that I should even have let the soft[1] words escape my soul. Into the house, children! and whoso feels he must not be present at my sacrifice, must see to it himself; I will not spoil my

[1] Reading *πρόεσθαι* for which Badham proposes *πρόσεσθαι*, "indulge my mind in gentle thoughts."

handiwork. Ah! ah! do not, my heart, O do not do this deed! Let the children go, unhappy one, spare the babes! For if they live, they will cheer thee in our exile there.[1] Nay, by the fiends of hell's abyss, never, never will I hand my children over to their foes to mock and flout. Die they must in any case, and since 'tis so, why I, the mother who bore them, will give the fatal blow. In any case their doom is fixed and there is no escape. Already the crown is on her head, the robe is round her, and she is dying, the royal bride; that do I know full well. But now since I have a piteous path to tread, and yet more piteous still the path I send my children on, fain would I say farewell to them. O my babes, my babes, let your mother kiss your hands. Ah! hands I love so well, O lips most dear to me! O noble form and features of my children, I wish ye joy, but in that other land, for here your father robs you of your home. O the sweet embrace, the soft young cheek, the fragrant breath! my children! Go, leave me; I cannot bear to longer look upon ye; my sorrow wins the day. At last I understand the awful deed I am to do; but passion, that cause of direst woes to mortal man, hath triumphed o'er my sober thoughts.

Cho. Oft ere now have I pursued subtler themes and have faced graver issues than woman's sex should seek to probe; but then e'en we aspire to culture, which dwells with us to teach us wisdom; I say not all; for small is the class amongst women—(one maybe shalt thou find 'mid many)—that is not incapable of culture. And amongst mortals I do assert that they who are wholly without experience and have never had children far surpass in happiness those who are parents. The childless, because they have never proved whether children grow up to be a blessing or curse to men are removed from all share in many troubles; whilst those who have a sweet race of children growing up in their houses do wear away, as I perceive, their whole life through;

[1] At Athens.

first with the thought how they may train them up in virtue, next how they shall leave their sons the means to live; and after all this 'tis far from clear whether on good or bad children they bestow their toil. But one last crowning woe for every mortal man I now will name; suppose that they have found sufficient means to live, and seen their children grow to man's estate and walk in virtue's path, still if fortune so befall,[1] comes Death and bears the children's bodies off to Hades. Can it be any profit to the gods to heap upon us mortal men beside our other woes this further grief for children lost, a grief surpassing all?

MED. Kind friends, long have I waited expectantly to know how things would at the palace chance. And lo! I see one of Jason's servants coming hither, whose hurried gasps for breath proclaim him the bearer of some fresh tidings.

MES. Fly, fly, Medea! who hast wrought an awful deed, transgressing every law; nor leave behind or sea-borne bark or car that scours the plain.

MED. Why, what hath chanced that calls for such a flight of mine?

MES. The princess is dead, a moment gone, and Creon too, her sire, slain by those drugs of thine.

MED. Tidings most fair are thine! Henceforth shalt thou be ranked amongst my friends and benefactors.

MES. Ha! What? Art sane? Art not distraught, lady, who hearest with joy the outrage to our royal house done, and art not at the horrid tale afraid?

MED. Somewhat have I, too, to say in answer to thy words. Be not so hasty, friend, but tell the manner of their death, for thou wouldst give me double joy, if so they perished miserably.

MES. When the children twain whom thou didst bear

[1] Reading *κυοῖσει* (Ald. et Schol.). The MSS. vary between *κυρήσας*, *σαι*, *σει*.

came with their father and entered the palace of the bride, right glad were we thralls who had shared thy griefs, for instantly from ear to ear a rumour spread that thou and thy lord had made up your former quarrel. One kissed thy children's hands, another their golden hair, while I for very joy went with them in person to the women's chambers. Our mistress, whom now we do revere in thy room, cast a longing glance at Jason, ere she saw thy children twain; but then she veiled her eyes and turned her blanching cheek away, disgusted at their coming: but thy husband tried to check his young bride's angry humour with these words: "O, be not angered 'gainst thy friends; cease from wrath and turn once more thy face this way, counting as friends whomso thy husband counts, and accept these gifts, and for my sake crave thy sire to remit these children's exile." Soon as she saw the ornaments, no longer she held out, but yielded to her lord in all; and ere the father and his sons were far from the palace gone, she took the broidered robe and put it on, and set the golden crown about her tresses, arranging her hair at her bright mirror, with many a happy smile at her breathless counterfeit. Then rising from her seat she passed across the chamber, tripping lightly on her fair white foot, exulting in the gift, with many a glance at her uplifted ankle.[1] When lo! a scene of awful horror did ensue. In a moment she turned pale, reeled backwards, trembling in every limb, and sinks upon a seat scarce soon enough to save herself from falling to the ground. An aged dame, one of her company, thinking belike it was a fit from Pan[2] or some god sent, raised a cry of prayer, till from her mouth she saw the foam-flakes issue, her eyeballs rolling in their sockets, and all the blood her

[1] *τένοντ' ἐς ὀρθὸν σκοπουμένη*, (1) she stretches out her foot to see how the robe falls over it (Paley), (2) she stands on tiptoe and looks back to see how the dress hangs behind = erecto pede (Pflugk).

[2] Any sudden seizure was ascribed to Pan's agency.

face desert; then did she raise a loud scream far different from her former cry. Forthwith one handmaid rushed to her father's house, another to her new bridegroom to tell his bride's sad fate, and the whole house echoed with their running to and fro. By this time would a quick walker have made the turn in a course of six plethra[1] and reached the goal, when she with one awful shriek awoke, poor sufferer, from her speechless trance and oped her closed eyes, for against her a twofold anguish was warring. The chaplet of gold about her head was sending forth a wondrous stream of ravening flame, while the fine raiment, thy children's gift, was preying on the hapless maiden's fair white flesh; and she starts from her seat in a blaze and seeks to fly, shaking her hair and head this way and that, to cast the crown therefrom; but the gold held firm to its fastenings, and the flame, as she shook her locks, blazed forth the more with double fury. Then to the earth she sinks, by the cruel blow o'ercome, past all recognition now save to a father's eye; for her eyes had lost their tranquil gaze, her face no more its natural look preserved, and from the crown of her head blood and fire in mingled stream ran down; and from her bones the flesh kept peeling off beneath the gnawing of those secret drugs, e'en as when the pine-tree weeps its tears of pitch, a fearsome sight to see. And all were afraid to touch the corpse, for we were warned by what had chanced. Anon came her hapless father unto the house, all unwitting of her doom, and stumbles o'er the dead, and loud he cried, and folding his arms about her kissed her, with words like these the while, "O my poor,

[1] The reading is doubtful, still more the meaning. The conjecture *ἀνελϝών* is adopted here, with Musgrave's *ἂν ἤπτετο* for *ἀνθήπτετο*. *ἀνελθὼν κῶλον 'εκπλέθρου δρόμου.* This would mean, her swoon lasted as long as a man would take to go and return the distance of six plethra. The *κῶλον* then must be the 'limb, lap' of the course up to the turning post.

poor child, which of the gods hath destroyed thee thus foully? Who is robbing me of thee, old as I am and ripe for death? O my child, alas! would I could die with thee!" He ceased his sad lament, and would have raised his aged frame, but found himself held fast by the fine-spun robe as ivy that clings to the branches of the bay, and then ensued a fearful struggle. He strove to rise, but she still held him back; and if ever he pulled with all his might, from off his bones his aged flesh he tore. At last he gave it up, and breathed forth his soul in awful suffering; for he could no longer master the pain. So there they lie, daughter and aged sire, dead side by side, a grievous sight that calls for tears. And as for thee, I leave thee out of my consideration, for thyself must discover a means to escape punishment. Not now for the first time I think this human life a shadow; yea, and without shrinking I will say that they amongst men who pretend to wisdom and expend deep thought on words do incur a serious charge of folly; for amongst mortals no man is happy; wealth may pour in and make one luckier than another, but none can happy be.

Cho. This day the deity, it seems, will mass on Jason, as he well deserves, a heavy load of evils. Woe is thee, daughter of Creon! We pity thy sad fate, gone as thou art to Hades' halls as the price of thy marriage with Jason.

Med. My friends, I am resolved upon the deed; at once will I slay my children and then leave this land, without delaying long enough to hand them over to some more savage hand to butcher. Needs must they die in any case; and since they must, I will slay them—I, the mother that bare them. O heart of mine, steel thyself! Why do I hesitate to do the awful deed that must be done? Come, take the sword, thou wretched hand of mine! Take it, and advance to the post whence starts thy life of sorrow! Away with cowardice! Give not one thought to thy babes,

how dear they are or how thou art their mother This one brief day forget thy children dear, and after that lament; for though thou wilt slay them yet they were thy darlings still, and [1] I am a lady of sorrows.

CHO. O earth, O sun whose beam illumines all, look, look upon this lost woman, ere she stretch forth her murderous hand upon her sons for blood; for lo! these are scions of thy own golden seed, and the blood of gods is in danger of being shed by man. O light, from Zeus proceeding, stay her, hold her hand, forth from the house chase this fell bloody fiend by demons led. Vainly wasted were the throes thy children cost thee; vainly hast thou born, it seems, sweet babes, O thou who hast left behind thee that passage through the blue Symplegades, that strangers justly hate. Ah! hapless one, why doth fierce anger thy soul assail? Why [2] in its place is fell murder growing up? For grievous unto mortal men are pollutions that come of kindred blood poured on the earth, woes to suit each crime hurled from heaven on the murderer's house.

1st SON (*within*). Ah, me; what can I do? Whither fly to escape my mother's blows?

2nd SON (*within*). I know not, sweet brother mine; we are undone.

CHO. Didst hear, didst hear the children's cry? O lady, born to sorrow, victim of an evil fate! Shall I enter the house? For the children's sake I am resolved to ward off the murder.

1st SON (*within*). Yea, by heaven I adjure you; help, your aid is needed.

[1] The construction is intentionally irregular. Her emotion prevents a grammatical completion of the sentence.

[2] This use of *ἀμείβεται* is so unusual that the passage is open to grave suspicion. The three following lines are extremely confused and probably corrupt. Weil proposes *ἐπέγειρεν* for *'επὶ γαῖαν*; var. lect. for *ξυνῳδὰ* is *ξύνοιδα*.

2nd Son (*within*). Even now the toils of the sword are closing round us.

Cho. O hapless mother, surely thou hast a heart of stone or steel to slay the offspring of thy womb by such a murderous doom. Of all the wives of yore I know but one who laid her hand upon her children dear, even Ino,[1] whom the gods did madden in the day that the wife of Zeus drove her wandering from her home. But she, poor sufferer, flung herself into the sea because of the foul murder of her children, leaping o'er the wave-beat cliff, and in her death was she united to her children twain. Can there be any deed of horror left to follow this? Woe for the wooing of women fraught with disaster! What sorrows hast thou caused for men ere now!

Jas. Ladies, stationed near this house, pray tell me is the author of these hideous deeds, Medea, still within, or hath she fled from hence? For she must hide beneath the earth or soar on wings towards heaven's vault, if she would avoid the vengeance of the royal house. Is she so sure she will escape herself unpunished from this house, when she hath slain the rulers of the land? But enough of this! I am forgetting her children. As for her, those whom she hath wronged will do the like by her; but I am come to save the children's life, lest the victim's kin visit their wrath on me, in vengeance for the murder foul, wrought by my children's mother.

Cho. Unhappy man, thou knowest not the full extent of thy misery, else had thou never said those words.

Jas. How now? Can she want to kill me too?

Cho. Thy sons are dead; slain by their own mother's hand.

[1] This is Euripides' version of the legend, not the usual one; which makes Athamas the father go mad and kill one son, while Ino leaps into the sea with the other.

JAS. O God! what sayest thou? Woman, thou hast sealed my doom.

CHO. Thy children are no more; be sure of this

JAS. Where slew she them; within the palace or outside?

CHO. Throw wide the doors and see thy children's murdered corpses.

JAS. Haste, ye slaves, loose the bolts, undo the fastenings, that I may see the sight of twofold woe, my murdered sons and her, whose blood in vengeance I will shed.

[MEDEA *in mid air, on a chariot drawn by dragons; the children's corpses by her.*

MED. Why shake those doors and attempt to loose their bolts, in quest of the dead and me their murderess? From such toil desist. If thou wouldst aught with me, say on, if so thou wilt; but never shalt thou lay hand on me, so swift the steeds the sun, my father's sire, to me doth give to save me from the hand of my foes.

JAS. Accursed woman! by gods, by me and all mankind abhorred as never woman was, who hadst the heart to stab thy babes, thou their mother, leaving me undone and childless; this hast thou done and still dost gaze upon the sun and earth after this deed most impious. Curses on thee! I now perceive what then I missed in the day I brought thee, fraught with doom, from thy home in a barbarian land to dwell in Hellas, traitress to thy sire and to the land that nurtured thee. On me the gods have hurled the curse that dogged thy steps, for thou didst slay thy brother at his hearth ere thou cam'st aboard our fair ship "Argo." Such was the outset of thy life of crime; then didst thou wed with me, and having born me sons to glut thy passion's lust, thou now hast slain them. Not one amongst the wives of Hellas e'er had dared this deed; yet before them all I chose thee for my wife, wedding a foe to be my doom, no woman, but a lioness fiercer than Tyrrhene Scylla in

nature. But with reproaches heaped a thousandfold I cannot wound thee, so brazen is thy nature. Perish, vile sorceress, murderess of thy babes! Whilst I must mourn my luckless fate, for I shall ne'er enjoy my new-found bride, nor shall I have the children, whom I bred and reared, alive to say the last farewell to me; nay, I have lost them.

MED. To this thy speech I could have made a long retort, but Father Zeus knows well all I have done for thee, and the treatment thou hast given me. Yet thou wert not ordained to scorn my love and lead a life of joy in mockery of me, nor was thy royal bride nor Creon, who gave thee a second wife, to thrust me from this land and rue it not. Wherefore, if thou wilt, call me e'en a lioness, and Scylla, whose home is in the Tyrrhene land; for I in turn have wrung thy heart, as well I might.

JAS. Thou, too, art grieved thyself, and sharest in my sorrow.

MED. Be well assured I am; but it relieves my pain to know thou canst not mock at me.

JAS. O my children, how vile a mother ye have found!

MED. My sons, your father's feeble lust has been your ruin!

JAS. 'Twas not my hand, at any rate, that slew them.

MED. No, but thy foul treatment of me, and thy new marriage.

JAS. Didst think that marriage cause enough to murder them?

MED. Dost think a woman counts this a trifling injury?

JAS. So she be self-restrained; but in thy eyes all is evil.

MED. Thy sons are dead and gone. That will stab thy heart.

JAS. They live, methinks,[1] to bring a curse upon thy head.

[1] Reading οἶμαι with Tyrrwhitt.

MED. The gods know, whoso of them began this troublous coil.

JAS. Indeed, they know that hateful heart of thine.

MED. Thou art as hateful. I am aweary of thy bitter tongue.

JAS. And I likewise of thine. But parting is easy.

MED. Say how; what am I to do? for I am fain as thou to go.

JAS. Give up to me those dead, to bury and lament.

MED. No, never! I will bury them myself, bearing them to Hera's sacred field, who watches o'er the Cape, that none of their foes may insult them by pulling down their tombs; and in this land of Sisyphus I will ordain hereafter a solemn feast and mystic rites to atone for this impious murder. Myself will now to the land of Erechtheus, to dwell with Ægeus, Pandion's son. But thou, as well thou mayest, shalt die a caitiff's death, thy head [1] crushed 'neath a shattered relic of Argo, when thou hast seen the bitter ending of my marriage.

JAS. The curse of our sons' avenging spirit and of Justice, that calls for blood, be on thee!

MED. What god or power divine hears thee, breaker of oaths and every law of hospitality?

JAS. Fie upon thee! cursed witch! child-murderess!

MED. To thy house! go, bury thy wife.

JAS. I go, bereft of both my sons.

MED. Thy grief is yet to come; wait till old age is with thee too.

JAS. O my dear, dear children!

MED. Dear to their mother, not to thee.

JAS. And yet thou didst slay them?

MED. Yea, to vex thy heart.

[1] Legend told how Jason was slain by a beam falling on him as he lay asleep under the shadow of his ship Argo.

JAS. One last fond kiss, ah me! I fain would on their lips imprint.

MED. Embraces now, and fond farewells for them; but then a cold repulse!

JAS. By heaven I do adjure thee, let me touch their tender skin.

MED. No, no! in vain this word has sped its flight.

JAS. O Zeus, dost hear how I am driven hence; dost mark the treatment I receive from this she-lion, fell murderess of her young? Yet so far as I may and can, I raise for them a dirge, and do adjure[1] the gods to witness how thou hast slain my sons, and wilt not suffer me to embrace or bury their dead bodies. Would I had never begotten them to see thee slay them after all!

CHO. Many a fate doth Zeus dispense, high on his Olympian throne; oft do the gods bring things to pass beyond man's expectation; that, which we thought would be, is not fulfilled, while for the unlooked-for god finds out a way; and such hath been the issue of this matter.

[1] κἀπιβεάζω, Blomfield's emendation for MSS. κἀπιβοάζω.

HIPPOLYTUS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

APHRODITE.
HIPPOLYTUS.
ATTENDANTS OF HIPPOLYTUS.
CHORUS OF TRŒZENIAN WOMEN.
NURSE OF PHÆDRA.
PHÆDRA.
THESEUS.
FIRST MESSENGER.
SECOND MESSENGER.
ARTEMIS.

SCENE.—Before the palace of Pittheus at Trœzen.

HIPPOLYTUS.

APH. Wide o'er man my realm extends, and proud the name that I, the goddess Cypris, bear, both in heaven's courts and 'mongst all those who dwell within the limits of the sea [1] and the bounds of Atlas, beholding the sun-god's light; those that respect my power I advance to honour, but bring to ruin all who vaunt themselves at me. For even in the race of gods this feeling finds a home, even pleasure at the honour men pay them. And the truth of this I soon will show; for that son of Theseus, born of the Amazon, Hippolytus, whom holy Pittheus taught, alone of all the dwellers in this land of Trœzen, calls me vilest of the deities. Love he scorns, and, as for marriage, will none of it; but Artemis, daughter of Zeus, sister of Phœbus, he doth honour, counting her the chief of goddesses, and ever through the greenwood, attendant on his virgin goddess, he clears the earth of wild beasts with his fleet hounds, enjoying the comradeship of one too high for mortal ken. 'Tis not this I grudge him, no! why should I? But for his sins against me, I will this very day take vengeance on Hippolytus; for long ago I cleared the ground of many obstacles, so it needs but trifling toil. For as he came one day from the home of Pittheus to witness the solemn mystic rites and be initiated therein in Pandion's land,[2] Phædra, his father's noble wife, caught sight of him, and by my designs she found her heart was seized with wild desire. And ere she came to this Trœzenian realm, a temple did she rear to

[1] *i.e.* the Euxine. [2] *i.e.* Attica.

Cypris hard by the rock of Pallas where it o'erlooks this country, for love of the youth in another land; and to win his love in days to come she called after his name the temple she had founded for the goddess. Now, when Theseus left the land of Cecrops, flying the pollution of the blood of Pallas'[1] sons, and with his wife sailed to this shore, content to suffer exile for a year, then began the wretched wife to pine away in silence, moaning 'neath love's cruel scourge, and none of her servants knows what ails her. But this passion of hers must not fail thus. No, I will discover the matter to Theseus, and all shall be laid bare. Then will the father slay his child, my bitter foe, by curses, for the lord Poseidon granted this boon to Theseus; three wishes of the god to ask, nor ever ask in vain. So Phædra is to die, an honoured death 'tis true, but still to die; for I will not let her suffering outweigh the payment of such forfeit by my foes as shall satisfy my honour. But lo! I see the son of Theseus coming hither—Hippolytus, fresh from the labours of the chase. I will get me hence. At his back follows a long train of retainers, in joyous cries of revelry uniting and hymns of praise to Artemis, his goddess; for little he recks that Death hath oped his gates for him, and that this is his last look upon the light.

Hip. Come follow, friends, singing to Artemis, daughter of Zeus, throned in the sky, whose votaries we are.

Att. Lady goddess, awful queen, daughter of Zeus, all hail! hail! child of Latona and of Zeus, peerless mid the virgin choir, who hast thy dwelling in heaven's wide mansions at thy noble father's court, in the golden house of Zeus.

Hip. All hail! most beauteous Artemis, lovelier far than all the daughters of Olympus! For thee, O mistress mine, I bring this woven wreath, culled from a virgin

[1] Descendants of Pandion, king of Cecropia, slain by Theseus to obtain the kingdom.

meadow, where nor shepherd dares to herd his flock nor ever scythe hath mown, but o'er the mead unshorn the bee doth wing its way in spring; and with the dew from rivers drawn purity that garden tends. Such as know no cunning lore, yet in whose nature self-control, made perfect, hath a home, these may pluck the flowers, but not the wicked world. Accept, I pray, dear mistress, mine this chaplet from my holy hand to crown thy locks of gold; for I, and none other of mortals, have this high guerdon, to be with thee, with thee converse, hearing thy voice, though not thy face beholding. So be it mine to end my life as I began.

ATT. My prince! we needs must call upon the gods, our lords, so wilt thou listen to a friendly word from me?

HIP. Why, that will I! else were I proved a fool.

ATT. Dost know, then, the way of the world?

HIP. Not I; but wherefore such a question?

ATT. It hates reserve which careth not for all men's love.

HIP. And rightly too; reserve in man is ever galling.

ATT. But there's a charm in courteous affability?

HIP. The greatest surely; aye, and profit, too, at trifling cost.

ATT. Dost think the same law holds in heaven as well?

HIP. I trow it doth, since all our laws we men from heaven draw.

ATT. Why, then, dost thou neglect to greet an august goddess?[1]

HIP. Whom speak'st thou of? Keep watch upon thy tongue lest it some mischief cause.

ATT. Cypris I mean, whose image is stationed o'er thy gate.

HIP. I greet her from afar, preserving still my chastity.

ATT. Yet is she an august goddess, far renowned on earth.

[1] Mahaffy rearranges these next nine lines and certainly obtains a clearer meaning. His note repays study, if not wholly convincing. I translate from Paley's text as it stands.

HIP. 'Mongst gods as well as men we have our several preferences.

ATT. I wish thee luck, and wisdom too, so far as thou dost need it.

HIP. No god, whose worship craves the night, hath charms for me.

ATT. My son, we should avail us of the gifts that gods confer.

HIP. Go in, my faithful followers, and make ready food within the house; a well-filled board hath charms after the chase is o'er. Rub down my steeds ye must, that when I have had my fill I may yoke them to the chariot and give them proper exercise. As for thy Queen of Love, a long farewell to her. [*Exit* HIPPOLYTUS.

ATT. Meantime I with sober mind, for I must not copy my young master, do offer up my prayer to thy image, lady Cypris, in such words as it becomes a slave to use. But thou should'st pardon all, who, in youth's impetuous heat, speak idle words of thee; make as though thou hearest not, for gods must needs be wiser than the sons of men.

CHO. A rock there is, where, as they say, the ocean dew distils, and from its beetling brow it pours a copious stream for pitchers to be dipped therein; 'twas here I had a friend washing robes of purple in the trickling stream, and she was spreading them out on the face of a warm sunny rock; from her I had the tidings, first of all, that my mistress was wasting on the bed of sickness, pent within her house, a thin veil o'ershadowing her head of golden hair. And this is the third day I hear that she hath closed her lovely lips and denied her chaste body all sustenance, eager to hide her suffering and reach death's cheerless bourn. Maiden, thou must be possessed, by Pan made frantic or by Hecate, or by the Corybantes dread, and Cybele the mountain mother. Or maybe thou hast sinned against Dictynna, huntress-queen, and art wasting for thy guilt in sacrifice

unoffered. For she doth range o'er lakes' expanse and past the bounds of earth upon the ocean's tossing billows. Or doth some rival in thy house beguile thy lord, the captain of Erechtheus' sons, that hero nobly born, to secret amours hid from thee? Or hath some mariner sailing hither from Crete reached this port that sailors love, with evil tidings for our queen, and she with sorrow for her grievous fate is to her bed confined? Yea, and oft o'er woman's wayward nature settles a feeling of miserable perplexity, arising from labour-pains or passionate desire. I, too, have felt at times this sharp thrill shoot through me, but I would cry to Artemis, queen of archery, who comes from heaven to aid us in our travail, and thanks to heaven's grace she ever comes at my call with welcome help. Look! where the aged nurse is bringing her forth from the house before the door, while on her brow the cloud of gloom is deepening. My soul longs to learn what is her grief, the canker that is wasting our queen's fading charms.

Nur. O, the ills of mortal men! the cruel diseases they endure! What can I do for thee? from what refrain? Here is the bright sun-light, here the azure sky; lo! we have brought thee on thy bed of sickness without the palace; for all thy talk was of coming hither, but soon back to thy chamber wilt thou hurry. Disappointment follows fast with thee, thou hast no joy in aught for long; the present has no power to please; on something absent next thy heart is set. Better be sick than tend the sick; the first is but a single ill, the last unites mental grief with manual toil. Man's whole life is full of anguish; no respite from his woes he finds; but if there is aught to love beyond this life, night's dark pall doth wrap it round. And so we show our mad love of this life because its light is shed on earth, and because we know no other, and have naught revealed to us of all our earth may hide; and trusting to fables we drift at random.

PHÆ. Lift my body, raise my head! My limbs are all unstrung, kind friends. O handmaids, lift my arms, my shapely arms. The tire on my head is too heavy for me to wear; away with it, and let my tresses o'er my shoulders fall.

NUR. Be of good heart, dear child; toss not so wildly to and fro. Lie still, be brave, so wilt thou find thy sickness easier to bear; suffering for mortals is nature's iron law.

PHÆ. Ah! would I could draw a draught of water pure from some dew-fed spring, and lay me down to rest in the grassy meadow 'neath the poplar's shade!

NUR. My child, what wild speech is this? O say not such things in public, wild whirling words of frenzy bred!

PHÆ. Away to the mountain take me! to the wood, to the pine-trees I will go, where hounds pursue the prey, hard on the scent of dappled fawns. Ye gods! what joy to hark them on, to grasp the barbed dart, to poise Thessalian hunting-spears close to my golden hair, then let them fly.

NUR. Why, why, my child, these anxious cares? What hast thou to do with the chase? Why so eager for the flowing spring, when hard by these towers stands a hill well watered, whence thou may'st freely draw?

PHÆ. O Artemis, who watchest o'er sea-beat Limna[1] and the race-course thundering to the horse's hoofs, would I were upon thy plains curbing Venetian steeds!

NUR. Why betray thy frenzy in these wild whirling words? Now thou wert for hasting hence to the hills away to hunt wild beasts, and now thy yearning is to drive the steed over the waveless sands. This needs a cunning seer to say what god it is that reins thee from the course, distracting thy senses, child.

PHÆ. Ah me! alas! what have I done? Whither have I strayed, my senses leaving? Mad, mad! stricken by some demon's curse! Woe is me! Cover my head again, nurse.

[1] A sea-coast town of Trœzen.

Shame fills me for the words I have spoken. Hide me then; from my eyes the tear-drops stream, and for very shame I turn them away. 'Tis painful coming to one's senses again, and madness, evil though it be, has this advantage, that one has no knowledge of reason's overthrow.

NUR. There then I cover thee; but when will death hide my body in the grave? Many a lesson length of days is teaching me. Yea, mortal men should pledge themselves to moderate friendships only, not to such as reach the very heart's core; affection's ties should be light upon them to let them slip or draw them tight. For one poor heart to grieve for twain, as I do for my mistress, is a burden sore to bear. Men say that too engrossing pursuits in life more oft cause disappointment than pleasure, and too oft are foes to health. Wherefore I do not praise excess so much as moderation, and with me wise men will agree.

CHO. O aged dame, faithful nurse of Phædra, our queen, we see her sorry plight; but what it is that ails her we cannot discern, so fain would learn of thee and hear thy opinion.

NUR. I question her, but am no wiser, for she will not answer.

CHO. Nor tell what source these sorrows have?

NUR. The same answer thou must take, for she is dumb on every point.

CHO. How weak and wasted is her body!

NUR. What marvel? 'tis three days now since she has tasted food.

CHO. Is this infatuation, or an attempt to die?

NUR. 'Tis death she courts; such fasting aims at ending life.

CHO. A strange story! is her husband satisfied?

NUR. She hides from him her sorrow, and vows she is not ill.

CHO. Can he not guess it from her face?

NUR. He is not now in his own country.

CHO. But dost not thou insist in thy endeavour to find out her complaint, her crazy mind?

NUR. I have tried every plan, and all in vain; yet not even now will I relax my zeal, that thou too, if thou stayest, mayst witness my devotion to my unhappy mistress. Come, come, my darling child, let us forget, the twain of us, our former words; be thou more mild, smoothing that sullen brow and changing the current of thy thought, and I, if in aught before I failed in humouring thee, will let that be and find some better course. If thou art sick with ills thou canst not name, there be women here to help to set thee right; but if thy trouble can to men's ears be divulged, speak, that physicians may pronounce on it. Come, then, why so dumb? Thou shouldst not so remain, my child, but scold me if I speak amiss, or, if I give good counsel, yield assent. One word, one look this way! Ah me! Friends, we waste our toil to no purpose; we are as far away as ever; she would not relent to my arguments then, nor is she yielding now. Well, grow more stubborn than the sea, yet be assured of this, that if thou diest thou art a traitress to thy children, for they will ne'er inherit their father's halls, nay, by that knightly queen the Amazon[1] who bore a son to lord it over thine, a bastard born but not a bastard bred, whom well thou knowest, e'en Hippolytus.

PHÆ. Oh! oh!

NUR. Ha! doth that touch the quick?

PHÆ. Thou hast undone me, nurse; I do adjure by the gods, mention that man no more.

NUR. There now! thou art thyself again, but e'en yet refusest to aid thy children and preserve thy life.

[1] Hippolytus was the son of Theseus by a former union with the queen of the Amazons.

PHÆ. My babes I love, but there is another storm that buffets me.

NUR. Daughter, are thy hands from bloodshed pure?

PHÆ. My hands are pure, but on my soul there rests a stain.

NUR. The issue of some enemy's secret witchery?

PHÆ. A friend is my destroyer, one unwilling as myself.

NUR. Hath Theseus wronged thee in any wise?

PHÆ. Never may I prove untrue to him![1]

NUR. Then what strange mystery is there that drives thee on to die?

PHÆ. O, let my sin and me alone! 'tis not 'gainst thee I sin.

NUR. Never willingly! and, if I fail, 'twill rest at thy door.

PHÆ. How now? thou usest force in clinging to my hand.

NUR. Yea, and I will never loose my hold upon thy knees.

PHÆ. Alas for thee! my sorrows, shouldst thou learn them, would recoil on thee.

NUR. What keener grief for me than failing to win thee?

PHÆ. 'Twill be death to thee; though to me that brings renown.[1]

NUR. And dost thou then conceal this boon despite my prayers?

PHÆ. I do, for 'tis out of shame I am planning an honourable escape.

NUR. Tell it, and thine honour shall the brighter shine.

PHÆ. Away, I do conjure thee; loose my hand.

NUR. I will not, for the boon thou shouldst have granted me is denied.

[1] *i.e.* as he never has proved so to me.

[2] ὀλεῖ (1) 2nd sing. Fut. Mid. 'thou wilt die' as a consequence of having my secret (Paley). (2) 3rd sing. Fut. Active 'it will kill me' to keep silence, though that better ensures my honour.

PHÆ. I will grant it out of reverence for thy holy suppliant touch.

NUR. Henceforth I hold my peace; 'tis thine to speak from now.

PHÆ. Ah! hapless mother,[1] what a love was thine!

NUR. Her love for the bull? daughter, or what meanest thou?

PHÆ. And woe to thee! my sister,[2] bride of Dionysus.

NUR. What ails thee, child? speaking ill of kith and kin.

PHÆ. Myself the third to suffer! how am I undone!

NUR. Thou strik'st me dumb! Where will this history end?

PHÆ. That "love" has been our curse from time long past.

NUR. I know no more of what I fain would learn.

PHÆ. Ah! would thou couldst say for me what I have to tell.

NUR. I am no prophetess to unriddle secrets.

PHÆ. What is it they mean when they talk of people being in "love?"

NUR. At once the sweetest and the bitterest thing, my child.

PHÆ. I shall only find the latter half.

NUR. Ha! my child, art thou in love?

PHÆ. The Amazon's son, whoever he may be,—

NUR. Mean'st thou Hippolytus?

PHÆ. 'Twas thou, not I, that spoke his name.

NUR. O heavens! what is this, my child? Thou hast ruined me. Outrageous! friends: I will not live and bear it; hateful is life, hateful to mine eyes the light. This body I resign, will cast it off, and rid me of existence by

[1] Pasiphae, wife of Minos, deceived by Aphrodite into a fatal passion for a bull. Cf. Verg. Æn. vi. ad init., also Ovid Metam., viii, 131 sqq.

[2] Ariadne, deserted by Theseus in the isle of Naxos, where Dionysus found her.

my death. Farewell, my life is o'er. Yea, for the chaste have wicked passions, 'gainst their will maybe, but still they have. Cypris, it seems, is not a goddess after all, but something greater far, for she hath been the ruin of my lady and of me and our whole family.

Cho. O, too clearly didst thou hear our queen uplift her voice to tell her startling tale of piteous suffering. Come death ere I reach thy state of feeling,[1] loved mistress. O horrible! woe, for these miseries! woe, for the sorrows on which mortals feed! Thou art undone! thou hast disclosed thy sin to heaven's light. What hath each passing day and every hour in store for thee? Some strange event will come to pass in this house. For it is no longer uncertain where the star of thy love is setting, thou hapless daughter[2] of Crete.

Phæ. Ladies of Trœzen, who dwell here upon the frontier edge of Pelops' land, oft ere now in heedless mood through the long hours of night have I wondered why man's life is spoiled; and it seems to me their evil case is not due to any natural fault of judgment, for there be many dowered with sense, but we must view the matter in this light; by teaching and experience we learn the right but neglect it in practice, some from sloth, others from preferring pleasure of some kind or other to duty. Now life has many pleasures, protracted talk, and leisure, that seductive evil; likewise there is shame which is of two kinds, one a noble quality, the other a curse to families; but if for each its proper time were clearly known, these twain could not have had the selfsame letters to denote them. So then since I had made up my mind on these points, 'twas not likely any drug would alter it and make me think the contrary. And I will tell thee too the way my judgment went. When love wounded me, I bethought me how I best might bear the smart. So from

[1] *Or* 'before thou accomplish thy purpose.'

[2] She was daughter of Minos, king of Crete.

that day forth I began to hide in silence what I suffered. For I put no faith in counsellors, who know well to lecture others for presumption, yet themselves have countless troubles of their own. Next I did devise noble endurance of these wanton thoughts, striving by continence for victory. And last when I could not succeed in mastering love hereby, methought it best to die; and none can gainsay my purpose. For fain I would my virtue should to all appear, my shame have few to witness it. I knew my sickly passion now; to yield to it I saw how infamous; and more, I learnt to know so well that I was but a woman, a thing the world detests. Curses, hideous curses on that wife, who first did shame her marriage-vow for lovers other than her lord! 'Twas from noble families this curse began to spread among our sex. For when the noble countenance disgrace, poor folk of course will think that it is right. Those too I hate who make profession of purity, though in secret reckless sinners. How can these, queen Cypris, ocean's child, e'er look their husbands in the face? do they never feel one guilty thrill that their accomplice, night, or the chambers of their house will find a voice and speak? This it is that calls on me to die, kind friends, that so I may ne'er be found to have disgraced my lord, or the children I have born; no! may they grow up and dwell in glorious Athens, free to speak and act, heirs to such fair fame as a mother can bequeath. For to know that father or mother have sinned doth turn the stoutest heart to slavishness. This alone, men say, can stand the buffets of life's battle, a just and virtuous soul in whomsoever found. For time unmasks the villain sooner or later, holding up to them a mirror as to some blooming maid. 'Mongst such may I be never seen!

Cho. Now look! how fair is chastity however viewed, whose fruit is good repute amongst men.

Nur. My queen, 'tis true thy tale of woe, but lately told, did for the moment strike me with wild alarm, but now I do

reflect upon my foolishness; second thoughts are often best even with men. Thy fate is no uncommon one nor past one's calculations; thou art stricken by the passion Cypris sends. Thou art in love; what wonder? so are many more. Wilt thou, because thou lov'st, destroy thyself? 'Tis little gain, I trow, for those who love or yet may love their fellows, if death must be their end; for though the Love-Queen's onset in her might is more than man can bear, yet doth she gently visit yielding hearts, and only when she finds a proud unnatural spirit, doth she take and mock it past belief. Her path is in the sky, and mid the ocean's surge she rides; from her all nature springs; she sows the seeds of love, inspires the warm desire to which we sons of earth all owe our being. They who have aught to do with books of ancient scribes, or themselves engage in studious pursuits, know how Zeus of Semele was enamoured, how the bright-eyed goddess of the Dawn once stole Cephalus to dwell in heaven for the love she bore him; yet these in heaven abide nor shun the gods' approach, content, I trow, to yield to their misfortune. Wilt thou refuse to yield? thy sire, it seems, should have begotten thee on special terms or with different gods for masters, if in these laws thou wilt not acquiesce. How many, prithee, men of sterling sense, when they see their wives unfaithful, make as though they saw it not? How many fathers, when their sons have gone astray, assist them in their amours? 'tis part of human wisdom to conceal the deed of shame. Nor should man aim at excessive refinement in his life; for[1] they cannot with exactness finish e'en the roof that covers in a house; and how dost thou, after falling into so deep a pit, think to escape? Nay, if thou hast more of good than bad, thou wilt fare exceeding

[1] These lines are probably corrupt, but no satisfactory emendation has been supplied to make the sense more perfect. A conjectural reading is *κανὼν ἀκριβώσει 'ἄν*, but this involves an elision foreign to tragic usage.

well, thy human nature considered. O cease, my darling child, from evil thoughts, let wanton pride be gone, for this is naught else, this wish to rival gods in perfectness. Face thy love; 'tis heaven's will thou shouldst. Sick thou art, yet turn thy sickness to some happy issue. For there are charms and spells to soothe the soul; surely some cure for thy disease will be found. Men, no doubt, might seek it long and late if our women's minds no scheme devise.

Cho. Although she gives thee at thy present need the wiser counsel, Phædra, yet do I praise thee. Still my praise may sound more harsh and jar more cruelly on thy ear than her advice.

Phæ. 'Tis even this, too plausible a tongue, that overthrows good governments and homes of men. We should not speak to please the ear but point the path that leads to noble fame.

Nur. What means this solemn speech? No need of rounded phrases;[1] but at once must we sound the prince, telling him frankly how it is with thee. Had not thy life to such a crisis come,[2] or wert thou with self-control endowed, ne'er would I to gratify thy passions have urged thee to this course; but now 'tis a struggle fierce to save thy life, and therefore less to blame.

Phæ. Accursed proposal! peace, woman! never utter those shameful words again!

Nur. Shameful, maybe, yet for thee better than honour's code. Better this deed, if it shall save thy life, than that name thy pride will kill thee to retain.

Phæ. I conjure thee, go no further! for thy words are plausible but infamous; for though as yet love has not[3]

[1] The punctuation here adopted from Nauck is a vast improvement on the old reading, which put the stop after *τἀνδρός*, and gave a most coarse sentiment even for so lax a moralist as Phædra's nurse to utter.

[2] Nauck brackets these two lines, and for *προῆγον* reads *πῶς ἦγον*;

[3] I follow Nauck in reading *οὐ* for *εὖ*. *ὑπειργασμαι* = 'have been

undermined my soul, yet, if in specious words thou dress thy foul suggestion, I shall be beguiled into the snare from which I am now escaping.

NUR. If thou art of this mind, 'twere well thou ne'er hadst sinned; but as it is, hear me; for that is the next best course; I in my house have charms to soothe thy love, —'twas but now I thought of them;—these shall cure thee of thy sickness on no disgraceful terms, thy mind unhurt, if thou wilt be but brave. [But from him thou lovest we must get some token, a word or fragment of his robe, and thereby unite in one love's twofold stream.][1]

PHÆ. Is thy drug a salve or potion?

NUR. I cannot tell; be content, my child, to profit by it and ask no questions.

PHÆ. I fear me thou wilt prove too wise for me.

NUR. If thou fear this, confess thyself afraid of all; but why thy terror?

PHÆ. Lest thou shouldst breathe a word of this to Theseus' son.

NUR. Peace, my child! I will do all things well; only be thou, queen Cypris, ocean's child, my partner in the work! And for the rest of my purpose, it will be enough for me to tell it to our friends within the house. [*Exit* Nurse.

CHO. O Love, Love, that from the eyes diffusest soft desire, bringing on the souls of those, whom thou dost camp against, sweet grace, O never in evil mood appear to me, nor out of time and tune approach! Nor fire nor meteor hurls a mightier bolt than Aphrodite's shaft shot by the hands of Love, the child of Zeus. Idly, idly by the streams of Alpheus and in the Pythian shrines of Phœbus, Hellas

subdued'—according to Paley and Liddell and Scott (passive). Mahaffy extracts a middle sense 'prepared my soul for love's entry,' and adopts the conjectural *οὐ*, which would certainly seem to add clearness.

[1] These lines are perhaps spurious. Nauck and Weil both bracket them.

heaps the slaughtered steers; while Love we worship not, Love, the king of men, who holds the key to Aphrodite's sweetest bower,—worship not him who, when he comes, lays waste and marks his path to mortal hearts by wide-spread woe. There was that maiden [1] in Œchalia, a girl unwed, that knew no wooer yet nor married joys; her did the queen of Love [2] snatch from her home across the sea and gave unto Alcmena's son, mid blood and smoke and murderous marriage-hymns, to be to him a frantic fiend of hell; woe! woe for his wooing!

Ah! holy walls of Thebes, ah! fount of Dirce, ye could testify what course the love-queen follows. For with the blazing levin-bolt did she cut short the fatal marriage of Semele, mother of Zeus-born Bacchus. All things she doth inspire, dread goddess, winging her flight hither and thither like a bee.

PHÆ. Peace, ladies, peace! I am undone.

CHO. What, Phædra, is this dread event within thy house?

PHÆ. Hush! let me hear what those within are saying.

CHO. I am silent; this is surely the prelude to mischief.

PHÆ. Great gods! how awful are my sufferings!

CHO. What a cry was there! what loud alarm! say what sudden terror, lady, doth thy soul dismay.

PHÆ. I am undone. Stand here at the door and hear the noise arising in the house.

CHO. Thou art already by the bolted door; 'tis for thee to note the sounds that issue from within. And tell me, O tell me what mischief can be on foot.

[1] Iole, daughter of Eurytus, king of Œchalia. Her father refused, after promising, to give her to Heracles, who thereupon took her by force.

[2] There is some corruption here. It is probable the doubtful *εἰρεσ.α* conceals an allusion to Eurytus, as Monk indeed suggests; but the passage is not yet satisfactorily emended.

PHÆ. 'Tis the son of the horse-loving Amazon who calls, Hippolytus, uttering foul curses on my servant.

CHO. I hear a noise, but cannot clearly tell[1] which way it comes. Ah! 'tis through the door the sound reached thee.

PHÆ. Yes, yes, he is calling her plainly enough a go-between in vice, traitress to her master's honour.

CHO. Woe, woe is me! thou art betrayed, dear mistress! What counsel shall I give thee? thy secret is out; thou art utterly undone.

PHÆ. Ah me! ah me!

CHO. Betrayed by friends!

PHÆ. She hath ruined me by speaking of my misfortune; 'twas kindly meant, but an ill way to cure my malady.

CHO. O what wilt thou do now in thy cruel dilemma?

PHÆ. I only know one way, one cure for these my woes, and that is instant death.

HIP. O mother earth! O sun's unclouded orb! What words, unfit for any lips, have reached my ears!

NUR. Peace, my son, lest some one hear thy outcry.

HIP. I cannot hear such awful words and hold my peace.

NUR. I do implore thee by thy fair right hand.

HIP. Let go my hand, touch not my robe.

NUR. O by thy knees I pray, destroy me not utterly.

HIP. Why say this, if, as thou pretendest, thy lips are free from blame?

NUR. My son, this is no story to be noised abroad.

HIP. A virtuous tale grows fairer told to many.

NUR. Never dishonour thy oath, thy son.

HIP. My tongue an oath did take, but not my heart.

NUR. My son, what wilt thou do? destroy thy friends?

HIP. Friends indeed! the wicked are no friends of mine.

NUR. O pardon me; to err is only human, child.

HIP. Great Zeus, why didst thou, to man's sorrow, put woman, evil counterfeit, to dwell where shines the sun? If

[1] Reading ὅπᾳ. The old reading was ὅπα.

thou wert minded that the human race should multiply, it was not from women they should have drawn their stock, but in thy temples they should have paid gold or iron or ponderous bronze and bought a family, each man proportioned to his offering, and so in independence dwelt, from women free. [But now as soon as ever we would bring this plague into our home we bring its fortune to the ground.][1] 'Tis clear from this how great a curse a woman is; the very father, that begot and nurtured her, to rid him of the mischief, gives her a dower and packs her off; while the husband, who takes the noxious weed into his home, fondly decks his sorry idol in fine raiment and tricks her out in robes, squandering by degrees, unhappy wight! his house's wealth. For he is in this dilemma; say his marriage has brought him good connections, he is glad then to keep the wife he loathes; or, if he gets a good wife but useless relations, he tries to stifle the bad luck with the good. But it is easiest for him who has settled in his house as wife a mere nobody,[2] incapable from simplicity. I hate a clever woman; never may she set foot in *my* house who aims at knowing more than women need: for in these clever women Cypris implants a larger store of villainy, while the artless woman is by her shallow wit from levity debarred. No servant should ever have had access to a wife, but men should put to live with them beasts, which bite, not talk, in which case they could not speak to any one nor be answered back by them. But, as it is, the wicked in their chambers plot wickedness, and their servants carry it abroad. Even thus, vile wretch, thou cam'st to make me partner in an outrage on my father's honour; wherefore I must wash that stain away in running streams, dashing the water into my ears. How could I commit so foul a crime when by the very mention of it I feel myself

[1] Nauck brackets these two lines as spurious.

[2] For ἀλλὰ Weil proposes οὔσ'. Another conjecture is ἀλλὰ νωχελής.

polluted? Be well assured, woman, 'tis only my religious scruple saves thee. For had not I unawares been caught by an oath, 'fore heaven! I would not have refrained from telling all unto my father. But now I will from the house away, so long as Theseus is abroad, and will maintain strict silence. But, when my father comes, I will return and see how thou and thy mistress face him, and so shall I learn by experience the extent of thy audacity. Perdition seize you both! (*To the audience*). I can never satisfy my hate for women, no! not even though some say this is ever my theme, for of a truth they always are evil. So either let some one prove them chaste, or let me still trample on them for ever.

Cho. O the cruel, unhappy fate of women! What arts, what arguments have we, once we have made a slip, to loose by craft[1] the tight-drawn knot?

Phæ. I have met my deserts. O earth, O light of day! How can I escape the stroke of fate? How my pangs conceal, kind friends? What god will appear to help me, what mortal to take my part or help me in unrighteousness? The present calamity of my life admits of no escape. Most hapless I of all my sex!

Cho. Alas, alas! the deed is done, thy servant's schemes have gone awry, my queen, and all is lost.

Phæ. Accursed woman! traitress to thy friends! How hast thou ruined me! May Zeus, my ancestor, smite thee with his fiery bolt and uproot thee from thy place. Did I not foresee thy purpose, did I not bid thee keep silence on the very matter which is now my shame? But thou wouldst not be still; wherefore my fair name will not go with me to the tomb. But now I must another scheme devise. Yon youth, in the keenness of his fury, will tell his father of my sin, and the aged Pittheus of my state, and fill the world

[1] Following Nauck's reading δόλοις. If λόγου be retained, it would seem to mean 'loose the tight hold a word can keep on us' *i.e.* the threat of Hippolytus; but it is doubtful if the Greek will bear this.

with stories to my shame. Perdition seize thee and every meddling fool who by dishonest means would serve unwilling friends!

NUR. Mistress, thou may'st condemn the mischief I have done, for sorrow's sting o'ermasters thy judgment; yet can I answer thee in face of this, if thou wilt hear. 'Twas I who nurtured thee; I love thee still; but in my search for medicine to cure thy sickness I found what least I sought. Had I but succeeded, I had been counted wise, for the credit we get for wisdom is measured by our success.

PHÆ. Is it just, is it any satisfaction to me, that thou shouldst wound me first, then bandy[1] words with me?

NUR. We dwell on this too long; I was not wise, I own; but there are yet ways of escape from the trouble, my child.

PHÆ. Be dumb henceforth; evil was thy first advice to me, evil too thy attempted scheme. Begone and leave me, look to thyself; I will my own fortunes for the best arrange. (*Exit* Nurse). Ye noble daughters of Trœzen, grant me the only boon I crave; in silence bury what ye here have heard.

CHO. By majestic Artemis, child of Zeus, I swear I will never divulge aught of thy sorrows.

PHÆ. 'Tis well. But I, with all my thought,[2] can but one way discover out of this calamity, that so I may secure my children's honour, and find myself some help as matters stand. For never, never will I bring shame upon my Cretan home, nor will I, to save one poor life, face Theseus after my disgrace.

CHO. Art thou bent then on some cureless woe?

PHÆ. On death; the means thereto must I devise myself.

CHO. Hush!

[1] *συγχωρεῖν*, so Liddell and Scott, but it seems a doubtful usage, and Nauck suspects the word.

[2] The reading *προστρέπουσ'* offers no clear meaning; of the various suggestions Monk's *προσκοποῦσ'* is the simplest.

Phæ. Do thou at least advise me well. For this very day shall I gladden Cypris, my destroyer, by yielding up my life, and shall own myself vanquished by cruel love. Yet shall my dying be another's curse, that he may learn not to exult at my misfortunes; but when he comes to share the self-same plague with me, he will take a lesson in wisdom.

Cho. O to be nestling 'neath some pathless cavern, there by god's creating hand to grow into a bird amid the wingèd tribes! Away would I soar to Adria's wave-beat shore and to the waters of Eridanus; where a father's hapless daughters[1] in their grief for Phäethon distil into the glooming flood the amber brilliance of their tears. And to the apple-bearing strand of those minstrels in the west I then would come, where ocean's lord no more to sailors grants a passage o'er the deep dark main, finding there the heaven's holy bound, upheld by Atlas, where water from ambrosial founts wells up beside the couch of Zeus inside his halls, and holy earth, the bounteous mother, causes joy to spring in heavenly breasts. O white-winged bark, that o'er the booming ocean-wave didst bring my royal mistress from her happy home, to crown her queen 'mongst sorrow's brides! Surely evil omens from either port, at least from Crete, were with that ship, what time to glorious Athens it sped its way, and the crew made fast its twisted cable-ends upon the beach of Munychus, and on the land stept out. Whence comes it that her heart is crushed, cruelly afflicted by Aphrodite with unholy love; so she by bitter grief o'erwhelmed will tie a noose within her bridal bower to fit it to her fair white neck, too modest for this hateful lot in life, prizing o'er all her name and fame, and striving thus to rid her soul of passion's sting.

[1] The daughters of Helios and Clymene are represented as weeping for Phaethon their brother on the banks of Eridanus (Po). Ovid Metam. v. 340 sqq. says the sun turned their tears into amber, and they themselves became poplars on the river-bank.

MES. Help! ho! To the rescue all who near the palace stand! She hath hung herself, our queen, the wife of Theseus.

CHO. Woe worth the day! the deed is done; our royal mistress is no more, dead she hangs in the dangling noose.

MES. Haste! some one bring a two-edged knife wherewith to cut the knot about her neck!

1ST HALF CHO. Friends, what shall we do? think you we should enter the house, and loose the queen from the tight-drawn noose?

2ND HALF CHO. Why should *we?* Are there not young servants here? To do too much is not a safe course in life.

MES. Lay out the hapless corpse, straighten the limbs. This was a bitter way to sit at home and keep my master's house! [*Exit* Messenger.

CHO. She is dead, poor lady, so I hear. Already are they laying out the corpse.

THE. Ladies, can ye tell me what the uproar in the palace means? There came the sound of servants weeping bitterly to mine ear. None of my household deign to open wide the gates and give me glad welcome as a traveller from prophetic shrines. Hath aught befallen old Pittheus? No. Though he be well advanced in years, yet should I mourn, were he to quit this house.

CHO. 'Tis not against the old, Theseus, that fate, to strike thee, aims this blow; prepare thy sorrow for a younger corpse.

THE. Woe is me! is it a child's life death robs me of?

CHO. They live; but, cruellest news of all for thee, their mother is no more.

THE. What! my wife dead? By what cruel mischance?

CHO. About her neck she tied the hangman's knot.

THE. Had grief so chilled her blood? or what had befallen her?

CHO. I know but this, for I am myself but now arrived at the house to mourn thy sorrows, O Theseus.

THE. Woe is me! why have I crowned my head with woven garlands, when misfortune greets my embassage? Unbolt the doors, servants, loose their fastenings, that I may see the piteous sight, my wife, whose death is death to me.

[*The palace opens, disclosing the corpse.*

CHO. Woe! woe is thee for thy piteous lot! thou hast done thyself a hurt deep enough to overthrow this family. Ah! ah! the daring of it! done to death by violence and unnatural means, the desperate effort of thy own poor hand! Who cast the shadow o'er thy life, poor lady?

THE. Ah me, my cruel lot! sorrow hath done her worst on me. O fortune, how heavily hast thou set thy foot on me and on my house, by fiendish hands inflicting an unexpected stain? Nay, 'tis complete effacement of my life, making it impossible; for I see, alas! so wide an ocean of grief that I can never swim to shore again, nor breast the tide of this calamity. How shall I speak of thee, my poor wife, what tale of direst suffering tell? Thou art vanished like a bird from the covert of my hand, taking one headlong leap from me to Hades' halls. Alas, and woe! this is a bitter, bitter sight! This must be a judgment sent by God for the sins of an ancestor, which from some far source I am bringing on myself.

CHO. My prince, 'tis not to thee alone such sorrows come; thou hast lost a noble wife, but so have many others.

THE. Fain would I go hide me 'neath earth's blackest depth, to dwell in darkness with the dead in misery, now that I am reft of thy dear presence! for thou hast slain me than thyself e'en more. Who can tell me what caused the fatal stroke that reached thy heart, dear wife? Will no one tell me what befell? doth my palace all in vain give shelter to a herd of menials? Woe, woe for thee, my wife! sorrows

past speech, past bearing, I behold within my house; myself a ruined man, my home a solitude, my children orphans!

Cho. Gone and left us hast thou, fondest wife and noblest of all women 'neath the sun's bright eye or night's star-lit radiance.[1] Poor house, what sorrows are thy portion now! My eyes are wet with streams of tears to see thy fate; but the sequel to this tragedy has long with terror filled me.

The. Ha! what means this letter? clasped in her dear hand it hath some strange tale to tell. Hath she, poor lady, as a last request, written her bidding as to my marriage and her children? Take heart, poor ghost; no wife henceforth shall wed thy Theseus or invade his house. Ah! how yon seal of my dead wife stamped with her golden ring affects my sight! Come, I will unfold the sealed packet and read her letter's message to me.

Cho. Woe unto us! Here is yet another evil in the train by heaven sent. Looking to what has happened, I should count my lot in life no longer worth one's while to gain.[2] My master's house, alas! is ruined, brought to naught, I say. [3] Spare it, O Heaven, if it may be. Hearken to my prayer, for I see, as with prophetic eye, an omen boding mischief.

The. O horror! woe on woe! and still they come, too deep for words, too heavy to bear. Ah me!

Cho. What is it? speak, if I may share in it.

The. This letter loudly tells a hideous tale! where can I escape my load of woe? For I am ruined and undone, so awful are the words I find here written clear as if she cried them to me; woe is me!

[1] Reading with Jacobs, whom Nauck follows, *ἀστερωπὸν σέλας*.

[2] This passage, as it stands, is unintelligible and corrupt. Paley attempts to extract a meaning by changing *μὲν* into *γ'ἄν*, but the result is not very satisfactory.

[3] Nauck brackets the three following lines as suspicious.

CHO. Alas! thy words declare themselves the harbingers of woe.

THE. I can no longer keep the cursed tale within the portal of my lips, cruel though its utterance be. Ah me! Hippolytus hath dared by brutal force to violate my honour, recking naught of Zeus, whose awful eye is over all. O father Poseidon, once didst thou promise to fulfil three prayers of mine; answer one of these and slay my son, let him not escape this single day, if the prayers thou gavest me were indeed with issue fraught.

CHO. O king, I do conjure thee, call back that prayer; hereafter thou wilt know thy error. Hear, I pray.

THE. Impossible! Moreover I will banish him from this land, and by one of two fates shall he be struck down; either Poseidon, out of respect to my prayer, will cast his dead body into the house of Hades; or exiled from this land, a wanderer to some foreign shore, shall he eke out a life of misery.

CHO. Lo! where himself doth come, thy son Hippolytus, in good time; dismiss thy hurtful rage, King Theseus, and bethink thee what is best for thy family.

HIP. I heard thy voice, father, and hasted to come hither; yet know I not the cause of thy present[1] sorrow, but would fain learn of thee. Ha! what is this? thy wife a corpse I see; this is passing strange; 'twas but now I left her; a moment since she looked upon the light. How came she thus? the manner of her death? this would I learn of thee, father. Art dumb? silence availeth not in trouble; nay, for the heart that fain would know all must show its curiosity even in sorrow's hour. Be sure it is not right, father, to hide misfortunes from those who love, ay, more than love thee.

THE. O ye sons of men, victims of a thousand idle errors,

[1] Nauck from the Cento of the "Christus Patiens" restores *ταυῦν* for *τινι*; certainly an improvement in the Greek.

why teach your countless crafts, why scheme and seek to find a way for everything, while one thing ye know not nor ever yet have made your prize, a way to teach them wisdom whose souls are void of sense?

HIP. A very master in his craft the man, who can force fools to be wise! But these ill-timed subtleties of thine, father, make me fear thy tongue is running riot through trouble.

THE. Fie upon thee! man needs should have some certain test set up to try his friends, some touchstone of their hearts, to know each friend whether he be true or false; all men should have two voices, one the voice of honesty, expediency's the other, so would honesty confute its knavish opposite, and then we could not be deceived.

HIP. Say, hath some friend been slandering me and hath he still thine ear? am I, though guiltless, banned? I am amazed indeed; thy random, frantic words fill me with wild alarm.

THE. O the mind of mortal man! to what lengths will it proceed? What limit will its bold assurance have? for if it goes on growing as man's life advances, and each successor outdo the man before him in villainy, the gods will have to add another sphere unto the world, which shall take in the knaves and villains. Behold this man; he, my own son, hath outraged mine honour, his guilt most clearly proved by my dead wife. Now, since thou hast dared this loathly crime, come, look thy father in the face. Art thou the man who dost with gods consort, as one above the vulgar herd? art thou the chaste and sinless saint? Thy boasts will never persuade me to be guilty of attributing ignorance to gods. Go then, vaunt thyself, and drive[1] thy petty trade in viands formed of lifeless food; take Orpheus for thy chief and go

[1] Hippolytus is here taunted with being an exponent of the Orphic mysteries. Apparently Orpheus, like Pythagoras, taught the necessity of total abstinence from animal food.

a-revelling, with all honour for the vapourings of many a written scroll, seeing thou now art caught. Let all beware, I say, of such hypocrites! who hunt their prey with fine words, and all the while are scheming villainy. She is dead; dost think that this will save thee? Why this convicts thee more than all, abandoned wretch! What oaths, what pleas can outweigh this letter, so that thou shouldst 'scape thy doom? Thou wilt assert she hated thee, that 'twixt the bastard and the true-born child nature has herself put war; it seems then by thy showing she made a sorry bargain with her life, if to gratify her hate of thee she lost what most she prized. 'Tis said, no doubt, that frailty finds no place in man but is innate in woman; my experience is, young men are no more secure than women, whenso the Queen of Love excites a youthful breast; although their sex comes in to help them.[1] Yet why do I thus bandy words with thee, when before me lies the corpse, to be the clearest witness? Begone at once, an exile from this land, and ne'er set foot again in god-built Athens nor in the confines of my dominion. For if I am tamely to submit to this treatment from such as thee, no more will Sinis,[2] robber of the Isthmus, bear me witness how I slew him, but say my boasts are idle, nor will those rocks Scironian, that fringe the sea, call me the miscreants' scourge.

Cho. I know not how to call happy any child of man; for that which was first has turned and now is last.

Hip. Father, thy wrath and the tension of thy mind are terrible; yet this charge, specious though its arguments appear, becomes a calumny, if one lay it bare. Small skill

[1] This apparently means that men, being addicted to the sin mentioned, are more disposed to deal lightly with offenders of their own sex. But the line has little point, and has been condemned by Hirzel, whose judgment Nauck approves, without however actually noting the fact in his own text.

[2] Sinis and Sciron were two notorious evil-doers, whom Theseus had slain.

have I in speaking to a crowd, but have a readier wit for comrades of mine own age and small companies. Yea, and this is as it should be; for they, whom the wise despise, are better qualified to speak before a mob. Yet am I constrained under the present circumstances to break silence. And at the outset will I take the point which formed the basis of thy stealthy attack on me, designed to put me out of court unheard; dost see yon sun, this earth? These do not contain, for all thou dost deny it, chastity surpassing mine. To reverence God I count the highest knowledge, and to adopt as friends not those who attempt injustice, but such as would blush to propose to their companions aught disgraceful or pleasure them by shameful services; to mock at friends is not my way, father, but I am still the same behind their backs as to their face. The very crime thou thinkest to catch me in, is just the one I am untainted with, for to this day have I kept me pure from women. Nor know I aught thereof, save what I hear or see in pictures, for I have no wish to look even on these, so pure my virgin soul. I grant my claim to chastity may not convince thee; well, 'tis then for thee to show the way I was corrupted. Did this woman exceed in beauty all her sex? Did I aspire to fill the husband's place after thee and succeed to thy house? [[1] That surely would have made me out a fool, a creature void of sense. Thou wilt say, "Your chaste man loves to lord it." No, no! say I, sovereignty pleases only those whose hearts are quite corrupt. Now, I would be the first and best at all the games in Hellas, but second in the state, for ever happy thus with the noblest for my friends. For there one may be happy, and the absence of danger gives a charm beyond all princely joys.] One thing I have not said, the

[1] The next few lines teem with so many difficulties, and present such evident traces of corruption that Weil rejects them bodily; Nauck, approving his verdict, endeavours however by new punctuation to extort a meaning; while Mahaffy, following a system scarcely likely to win

rest thou hast. Had I a witness to attest my purity, and were I pitted 'gainst her still alive, facts would show thee on enquiry who the culprit was. Now by Zeus, the god of oaths, and by the earth, whereon we stand, I swear to thee I never did lay hand upon thy wife nor would have wished to, or have harboured such a thought. Slay me, ye gods! rob me of name and honour, from home and city cast me forth, a wandering exile o'er the earth! nor sea nor land receive my bones when I am dead, if I am such a miscreant! I cannot say if she through fear destroyed herself, for more than this am I forbid. With her discretion took the place of chastity, while I, though chaste, was not discreet in using this virtue.[1]

CHO. Thy oath by heaven, strong security, sufficiently refutes the charge.

THE. A wizard or magician must the fellow be, to think he can first flout me, his father, then by coolness master my resolve.

HIP. Father, thy part in this doth fill me with amaze; wert thou my son and I thy sire, by heaven! I would have slain, not let thee off with banishment, hadst thou presumed to violate my honour.

THE. A just remark! yet shalt thou not die by the sentence thine own lips pronounce upon thyself; for death,

favour universally, entirely rearranges the passage. It is not improbable that here and elsewhere in this play, the two editions of it may have led to some confusion, due to the introduction by ignorant copyists of inappropriate lines from one edition to the other.

[1] There seems to be a play on the double meaning of the word *σώφρων*, unattainable by any one word in English. To obtain this, however, the Greek must be rather violently handled. Nauck cuts the Gordian knot by at once rejecting the passage; his plan certainly relieves Euripides of a host of difficulties, but where is it to stop? Of many conjectures, Weil's is so ingenious that it is at least worth quoting: . . . *οὐκ ἔχουσ' ἄλλως φρονεῖν . . . οὐ κακῶς . . . i.e.* "she was virtuous, because she had no chance of being otherwise, whereas I, who had such a chance, did not put it to a bad use."

that cometh in a moment, is an easy end for wretchedness. Nay, thou shalt be exiled from thy fatherland, [and wandering to a foreign shore drag out a life of misery; for such are the wages of sin.] [1]

HIP. Oh! what wilt thou do? Wilt thou banish me, without so much as waiting for Time's evidence on my case?

THE. Ay, beyond the sea, beyond the bounds of Atlas, if I could, so deeply do I hate thee.

HIP. What! banish me untried, without even testing my oath, the pledge I offer, or the voice of seers?

THE. This letter here, though it bears no seers' signs, arraigns thy pledges; as for birds that fly o'er our heads, a long farewell to them.

HIP. (*aside*). Great gods! why do I not unlock my lips, seeing that I am ruined by you, the objects of my reverence? No, I will not; I should nowise persuade those whom I ought to, and in vain should break the oath I swore.

THE. Fie upon thee! that solemn air of thine is more than I can bear. Begone from thy native land forthwith!

HIP. Whither shall I turn? Ah me! whose friendly house will take me in, an exile on so grave a charge?

THE. Seek one who loves to entertain as guests and partners in his crimes corrupters of men's wives.

HIP. Ah me! this wounds my heart and brings me nigh to tears to think that I should appear so vile, and thou believe me so.

THE. Thy tears and forethought had been more in season when thou didst presume to outrage thy father's wife.

HIP. O house, I would thou couldst speak for me and witness if I am so vile!

THE. Dost fly to speechless witnesses? This deed, though it speaketh not, proves thy guilt clearly.

HIP. Alas! Would I could stand and face myself, so should I weep to see the sorrows I endure.

[1] Bergk rejects the first, Nauck the second of these lines.

THE. Ay, 'tis thy character to honour thyself far more than reverence thy parents, as thou shouldst.

HIP. Unhappy mother! son of sorrow! Heaven keep all friends of mine from bastard birth!

THE. Ho! servants, drag him hence! You heard my proclamation long ago condemning him to exile.

HIP. Whoso of them doth lay a hand on me shall rue it; thyself expel me, if thy spirit move thee, from the land.

THE. I will, unless my word thou straight obey; no pity for thy exile steals into my heart. [*Exit* THESEUS.

HIP. The sentence then, it seems, is passed. Ah, misery! How well I know the truth herein, but know no way to tell it! O daughter of Latona, dearest to me of all deities, partner, comrade in the chase, far from glorious Athens must I fly. Farewell, city and land of Erechtheus; farewell, Trœzen, most joyous home wherein to pass the spring of life; 'tis my last sight of thee, farewell! Come, my comrades in this land, young like me, greet me kindly and escort me forth, for never will ye behold a purer soul, for all my father's doubts. [*Exit* HIPPOLYTUS.

CHO. In very deed the thoughts I have about the gods, whenso they come into my mind, do much to soothe its grief, but though I cherish secret hopes of some great guiding will, yet am I at fault when I survey the fate and doings of the sons of men; change succeeds to change, and man's life veers and shifts in endless restlessness. Fortune grant me this, I pray, at heaven's hand,—a happy lot in life and a soul from sorrow free; opinions let me hold not too precise nor yet too hollow; but, lightly changing my habits to each morrow as it comes, may I thus attain a life of bliss! For now no more is my mind free from doubts, unlooked-for sights greet my vision; for lo! I see the morning star of Athens, eye of Hellas, driven by his father's fury to another land. Mourn, ye sands of my native shores, ye oak-groves on the hills, where with his fleet hounds he would hunt the quarry

to the death, attending on Dictynna, awful queen. No more will he mount his car drawn by Venetian steeds, filling the course round Limna with the prancing[1] of his trained horses. Nevermore in his father's house shall he wake the Muse that never slept beneath his lute-strings; no hand will crown the spots where rests the maiden Latona 'mid the boskage deep; nor evermore shall our virgins vie to win thy love, now thou art banished; while I with tears at thy unhappy fate shall endure a lot all undeserved. Ah! hapless mother, in vain didst thou bring forth, it seems. I am angered with the gods; out upon them! O ye linkèd Graces, why are ye sending from his native land this poor youth, a guiltless sufferer, far from his home?

But lo! I see a servant of Hippolytus hasting with troubled looks towards the palace.

2ND MES. Ladies, where may I find Theseus, king of the country? pray, tell me if ye know; is he within the palace here?

CHO. Lo! himself approaches from the palace.

2ND MES. Theseus, I am the bearer of troublous tidings to thee and all citizens who dwell in Athens or the bounds of Trœzen.

THE. How now? hath some strange calamity o'ertaken these two neighbouring cities?

2ND MES. In one brief word, Hippolytus is dead. 'Tis true one slender thread still links him to the light of life.

THE. Who slew him? Did some husband come to blows with him, one whose wife, like mine, had suffered brutal violence?

2ND MES. He perished through those steeds that drew his chariot, and through the curses thou didst utter, praying to thy sire, the ocean-king, to slay thy son.

[1] Reading with Reiske, whom Nauck follows, γυμνάδος ἵππον. If the accus. plural is retained it would seem to mean, "checking with his foot (*i.e.* pressed against the chariot-front) his steeds."

THE. Ye gods and king Poseidon, thou hast proved my parentage by hearkening to my prayer! Say how he perished; how fell the uplifted hand of Justice to smite the villain who dishonoured me?

2ND MES. Hard by the wave-beat shore were we combing out his horses' manes, weeping the while, for one had come to say that Hippolytus was harshly exiled by thee and nevermore would return to set foot in this land. Then came he, telling the same doleful tale to us upon the beach, and with him was a countless throng of friends who followed after. At length he stayed his lamentation and spake: "Why weakly rave on this wise? My father's commands must be obeyed. Ho! servants, harness my horses to the chariot; this is no longer now city of mine. Thereupon each one of us bestirred himself, and, ere a man could say 'twas done, we had the horses standing ready at our master's side. Then he caught up the reins from the chariot-rail, first fitting his feet[1] exactly in the hollows made for them. But first with outspread palms he called upon the gods, "O Zeus, now strike me dead, if I have sinned, and let my father learn how he is wronging me, in death at least, if not in life." Therewith he seized the whip and lashed each horse in turn; while we, close by his chariot, near the reins, kept up with him along the road that leads direct to Argos and Epidaurus. And just as we were coming to a desert spot, a strip of sand beyond the borders of this country, sloping right to the Saronic gulf, there issued thence a deep rumbling sound, as it were an earthquake, a fearsome noise, and the horses reared their heads and pricked their ears, while we were filled with wild alarm to know whence came

[1] It is extremely doubtful what the *αὐταῖσιν ἀρβύλαισιν* here means. The same phrase occurs in Bacchæ, l. 1,134, where it clearly refers to sandals or boots; but such a rendering seems meaningless here, where Eustathius understands it of the places in which a charioteer put his feet to secure his balance when driving.

the sound ; when, as we gazed toward the wave-beat shore, a wave tremendous we beheld towering to the skies, so that from our view the cliffs of Sciron vanished, for it hid the isthmus and the rock of Asclepius ; then swelling and frothing with a crest of foam, the sea discharged it toward the beach where stood the harnessed car, and in the moment that it broke, that mighty wall of waters, there issued from the wave a monstrous bull, whose bellowing filled the land with fearsome echoes, a sight too awful as it seemed to us who witnessed it. A panic seized the horses there and then, but our master, to horses' ways quite used, gripped in both hands his reins, and tying them to his body pulled them backward as the sailor pulls his oar ; but the horses gnashed the forged bits between their teeth and bore him wildly on, regardless of their master's guiding hand or rein or jointed car. And oft as he would take the guiding rein and steer for softer ground, showed that bull in front to turn him back again, maddening his team with terror ; but if in their frantic career they ran towards the rocks, he would draw nigh the chariot-rail, keeping up with them, until, suddenly dashing the wheel against a stone, he upset and wrecked the car ; then was dire confusion, axle-boxes and linch-pins springing into the air. While he, poor youth, entangled in the reins was dragged along, bound by a stubborn knot, his poor head dashed against the rocks, his flesh all torn, the while he cried out piteously, "Stay, stay, my horses whom my own hand hath fed at the manger, destroy me not utterly. O luckless curse of a father ! Will no one come and save me for all my virtue?" Now we, though much we longed to help, were left far behind. At last, I know not how, he broke loose from the shapely reins that bound him, a faint breath of life still in him ; but the horses disappeared, and that portentous bull, among the rocky ground, I know not where. I am but a slave in thy house, 'tis true, O king, yet will I never believe so monstrous a charge against thy son's

character, no! not though the whole race of womankind should hang itself, or one should fill with writing every pine-tree tablet grown on Ida, sure as I am of his uprightness.

CHO. Alas! new troubles come to plague us, nor is there any escape from fate and necessity.

THE. My hatred for him who hath thus suffered made me glad at thy tidings, yet from regard for the gods and him, because he is my son, I feel neither joy nor sorrow at his sufferings.

2ND MES. But say, are we to bring the victim hither, or how are we to fulfil thy wishes? Bethink thee; if by me thou wilt be schooled, thou wilt not harshly treat thy son in his sad plight.

THE. Bring him hither, that when I see him face to face, who hath denied having polluted my wife's honour, I may by words and heaven's visitation convict him.

CHO. Ah! Cypris, thine the hand that guides the stubborn hearts of gods and men; thine, and that attendant boy's, who, with painted plumage gay, flutters round his victims on lightning wing. O'er the land and booming deep on golden pinion borne flits the god of Love, maddening the heart and beguiling the senses of all whom he attacks, savage whelps on mountains bred, ocean's monsters, creatures of this sun-warmed earth, and man; thine, O Cypris, thine alone the sovereign power to rule them all.

ART. Hearken, I bid thee, noble son of Ægeus: lo! 'tis I, Latona's child, that speak, I, Artemis. Why, Theseus, to thy sorrow dost thou rejoice at these tidings, seeing that thou hast slain thy son most impiously, listening to a charge not clearly proved, but falsely sworn to by thy wife? though clearly has the curse therefrom upon thee fallen. Why dost thou not for very shame hide beneath the dark places of the earth, or change thy human life and soar on wings to escape this tribulation? 'Mongst men of honour thou hast

now no share in life. Hearken, Theseus; I will put thy wretched case. Yet will it naught avail thee, if I do, but vex thy heart; still with this intent I came, to show thy son's pure heart,—that he may die with honour,—as well the frenzy, and, in a sense, the nobleness of thy wife; for she was cruelly stung with a passion for thy son by that goddess whom all we, that joy in virgin purity, detest. And though she strove to conquer love by resolution, yet by no fault of hers she fell, thanks to her nurse's strategy, who did reveal her malady unto thy son under oath. But he would none of her counsels, as indeed was right, nor yet, when thou didst revile him, would he break the oath he swore, from piety. She meantime, fearful of being found out, wrote a lying letter, destroying by guile thy son, but yet persuading thee.

THE. Woe is me!

ART. Doth my story wound thee, Theseus? Be still awhile; hear what follows, so wilt thou have more cause to groan. Dost remember those three prayers thy father granted thee, fraught with certain issue? 'Tis one of these thou hast misused, unnatural wretch, against thy son, instead of aiming it at an enemy. Thy sea-god sire, 'tis true, for all his kind intent, hath granted that boon he was compelled, by reason of his promise, to grant. But thou alike in his eyes and in mine hast shewn thy evil heart, in that thou hast forestalled all proof or voice prophetic, hast made no inquiry, nor taken time for consideration, but with undue haste cursed thy son even to the death.

THE. Perdition seize me! Queen revered!

ART. An awful deed was thine, but still even for this thou mayest obtain pardon; for it was Cypris that would have it so, sating the fury of her soul. For this is law amongst us gods; none of us will thwart his neighbour's will, but ever we stand aloof. For be well assured, did I not fear Zeus, never would I have incurred the bitter shame of handing

over to death a man of all his kind to me most dear. As for thy sin, first thy ignorance absolves thee from its villainy, next thy wife, who is dead, was lavish in her use of convincing arguments to influence thy mind. On thee in chief this storm of woe hath burst, yet is it some grief to me as well; for when the righteous die, there is no joy in heaven, albeit we try to destroy the wicked, house and home.

Cho. Lo! where he comes, this hapless youth, his fair young flesh and auburn locks most shamefully handled. Unhappy house! what twofold sorrow doth o'ertake its halls, through heaven's ordinance!

Hip. Ah! ah! woe is me! foully undone by an impious father's impious imprecation! Undone, undone! woe is me! Through my head shoot fearful pains; my brain throbs convulsively. Stop, let me rest my worn-out frame. Oh, oh! Accursed steeds, that mine own hand did feed, ye have been my ruin and my death. O by the gods, good sirs, I beseech ye, softly touch my wounded limbs. Who stands there at my right side? Lift me tenderly; with slow and even step conduct a poor wretch cursed by his mistaken sire. Great Zeus, dost thou see this? Me thy reverent worshipper, me who left all men behind in purity, plunged thus into yawning Hades 'neath the earth, reft of life; in vain the toils I have endured through my piety towards mankind. Ah me! ah me! O the thrill of anguish shooting through me! Set me down, poor wretch I am; come Death to set me free! Kill me, end my sufferings.[1] O for a sword two-edged to hack my flesh, and close this mortal life! Ill-fated curse of my father! the crimes of bloody kinsmen,[2] ancestors of old, now pass their boundaries and tarry not, and upon me are they come all guiltless as I am; ah! why? Alas, alas! what can I say? How from my life

[1] Nauck's comment on these closing lines of H.'s speech is, "restitui vix poterunt." Any translation of them can only be tentative.

[2] Such as Tantalus and Pelops, Atreus and Thyestes.

get rid of this relentless agony? O that the stern Death-god, night's black visitant, would give my sufferings rest!

ART. Poor sufferer! cruel the fate that links thee to it! Thy noble soul hath been thy ruin.

HIP. Ah! the fragrance from my goddess wafted! Even in my agony I feel thee near and find relief; she is here in this very place, my goddess Artemis.

ART. She is, poor sufferer! the goddess thou hast loved the best.

HIP. Dost see me, mistress mine? dost see my present suffering?

ART. I see thee, but mine eyes no tear may weep.

HIP. Thou hast none now to lead the hunt or tend thy fane.

ART. None now; yet e'en in death I love thee still.

HIP. None to groom thy steeds, or guard thy shrines.

ART. 'Twas Cypris, mistress of iniquity, devised this evil.

HIP. Ah me! now know I the goddess who destroyed me.

ART. She was jealous of her slighted honour, vexed at thy chaste life.

HIP. Ah! then I see her single hand hath struck down three of us.

ART. Thy sire and thee, and last thy father's wife.

HIP. My sire's ill-luck as well as mine I mourn.

ART. He was deceived by a goddess's design.

HIP. Woe is thee, my father, in this sad mischance!

THE. My son, I am a ruined man; life has no joys for me.

HIP. For this mistake I mourn thee rather than myself.

THE. O that I had died for thee, my son!

HIP. Ah! those fatal gifts thy sire Poseidon gave.

THE. Would God these lips had never uttered that prayer!

HIP. Why not? thou wouldst in any case have slain me in thy fury then.

THE. Yes; Heaven had perverted my power to think.

HIP. O that the race of men could bring a curse upon the gods!

ART. Enough! for though thou pass to gloom beneath the earth, the wrath of Cypris shall not, at her will, fall on thee unrequited, because thou hadst a noble righteous soul.[1] For I with mine own hand will with these unerring shafts avenge me on another,[2] who is her votary, dearest to her of all the sons of men. And to thee, poor sufferer, for thy anguish now will I grant high honours in the city of Trœzen; for thee shall maids unwed before their marriage cut off their hair, thy harvest through the long roll of time of countless bitter tears. Yea, and for ever shall the virgin choir hymn thy sad memory, nor shall Phædra's love for thee fall into oblivion and pass away unnoticed. But thou, O son of old Ægeus, take thy son in thine arms, draw him close to thee, for unwittingly thou slewest him, and men may well commit an error when gods put it in their way. And thee Hippolytus, I admonish; hate not thy sire, for in this death thou dost but meet thy destined fate. And now farewell! 'tis not for me to gaze upon the dead, or pollute my sight with death-scenes, and e'en now I see thee nigh that evil moment.[3] [*Exit* ARTEMIS.

HIP. Farewell, blest virgin queen! leave me now! How easily[4] thou resignest our long friendship! I am reconciled with my father at thy desire, yea, for ever before I would obey thy bidding. Ah me! the darkness is settling even now upon my eyes. Take me, father, in thy arms, lift me up.

THE. Woe is me, my son! what art thou doing to me thy hapless sire!

[1] Nauck encloses this line in brackets.

[2] Adonis.

[3] Cobet rejects this line.

[4] Surely this line is a gloss! The sentiment is singularly out of place in the mouth of an ardent votary, whom the goddess has just comforted.

HIP. I am a broken man; yes, I see the gates that close upon the dead.

THE. Canst leave me thus with murder on my soul!

HIP. No, no; I set thee free from this bloodguiltiness.

THE. What sayest thou? dost absolve me from bloodshed?

HIP. Artemis, the archer-queen, is my witness that I do.

THE. My own dear child, how generous dost thou show thyself to thy father!

HIP. Farewell, dear father! a long farewell to thee!

THE. O that holy, noble soul of thine!

HIP. Pray to have children such as me born in lawful wedlock.

THE. O leave me not, my son; endure awhile.

HIP. 'Tis finished, my endurance; I die, father; quickly cover my face with a mantle.

THE. O glorious Athens, realm of Pallas, what a splendid hero ye have lost! Ah me, ah me! How oft shall I remember thy evil work, O Cypris!

CHO. On all our citizens hath come this universal sorrow, unforeseen. Now shall the copious tear gush forth, for sad news about great men takes more than usual hold upon the heart.

ALCESTIS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

APOLLO.
DEATH.
CHORUS OF OLD MEN OF PHERÆ.
MAID.
ALCESTIS.
ATTENDANT.
ADMETUS.
EUMELUS.
HERACLES.
PHERES.

SCENE.—Before Admetus' palace in Pheræ.

ALCESTIS.

APO. Halls of Admetus, wherein I steeled my heart to be content with a servant's board, god though I was. Zeus was to blame; he slew my son Asclepius, piercing his bosom with a thunderbolt; whereat I was enraged and smote his Cyclopes, forgers of the heavenly fire; so my sire in recompense for this forced me to become a slave in a mortal's home. Then came I to this land and kept a stranger's flocks, and to this day have been the saviour of this house. For in Pheres' son I found a man as holy as myself, and him I saved from death by cheating Destiny, for they promised me, those goddesses of fate, that Admetus should escape the impending doom, if he found a substitute for the powers below. So he went through all his list of friends, made trial of each, his father and the aged mother that bare him,[1] but none he found save his wife alone that was willing to die for him and forego the light of life; she now within the house is upheld in his arms, gasping out her life; for to-day is she doomed to die and pass from life to death. But I, for fear pollution overtake me in the house, am leaving the shelter of this roof I love so well, for already I see Death hard by, the priest of souls departed, who is on his way to lead her to the halls of Hades; true to time he comes, watching this day that calls her to her doom.

DEA. Ha! What dost thou at this house? why is it thou art ranging here, Phœbus? Once again thou wrongest me, circumscribing and limiting the honours of the nether

[1] Dindorf has good reason for suspecting this line here.

world. Wert thou not content to hinder the death of Admetus, by thy knavish cunning baulking Destiny? but now again hast thou armed thee with thy bow and art keeping guard o'er her, this daughter of Pelias, who undertook, of her free will, to die for her lord and set him free.

Apo. Never fear; I have, be sure, justice and fair pleas to urge.

Dea. What has that bow to do, if thou hast justice on thy side?

Apo. 'Tis my habit ever to carry it.

Dea. Ay, and to help this house more than is right.

Apo. The reason is, I cannot bear a friend's distress.

Dea. Wilt rob me of this second corpse likewise?

Apo. Come! I did not take the other from thee by violence.

Dea. Then how is it he lives above the earth and not beneath?

Apo. He gave his wife instead, her whom now thou art come to fetch.

Dea. Yea, and I will bear her hence to the nether world.

Apo. Take her and go, for I do not suppose I can persuade thee.

Dea. To slay my rightful victim? Why, that is my appointed task.

Apo. Nay, but to lay thy deadly hand on those who soon would die.

Dea. I see thy drift, thy eager plea.

Apo. Is it then possible that Alcestis should attain old age?

Dea. It is not possible; I too, methinks, find a pleasure in my rights.

Thou canst not anyhow take more than one life.

Dea. When young lives die I reap a higher honour.

Apo. Should she die old, a sumptuous funeral will she have.

DEA. Phœbus, the law thou layest down is all in favour of the rich.

APO. What mean'st thou? art so wise, and I never knew it?

DEA. Those who have wealth would buy the chance of their dying old.

APO. It seems then thou wilt not grant me this favour.

DEA. Not I; my customs well thou knowest.

APO. That I do, customs men detest and gods abhor.

DEA. Thou canst not realise every lawless wish.

APO. Mark me, thou shalt have a check for all thy excessive fierceness; such a hero shall there come to Pheres' halls, by Eurystheus sent to fetch a team of steeds from the wintry world of Thrace; he, a guest awhile in these halls of Admetus, will wrest this woman from thee by sheer force. So wilt thou get no thanks from me but yet wilt do this all the same, and earn my hatred too.[1]

DEA. Thou wilt not gain thy purpose any the more for all thy many words; that woman shall to Hades' halls go down, I tell thee. Lo! I am going for her, that with the sword I may begin my rites, for he whose hair this sword doth hallow is sacred to the gods below.

SEMICHO. I.[2] What means this silence in front of the palace? why is the house of Admetus stricken dumb?

SEMICHO. II. Not one friend near to say if we must mourn our queen as dead, or if she liveth yet and sees the sun, Alcestis, daughter of Pelias, by me and all esteemed the best of wives to her husband.

SEMICHO. I. Doth any of you hear a groan, or sound of hands that smite together, or the voice of lamentation, telling all is over and done? Yet is there no servant sta-

[1] Dindorf rejects these two lines.

[2] In the arrangement of the following dialogue between the divided chorus I have mainly been guided by Paley, though I believe the last three lines assigned by him to a Semichorus are said as the two bands are re-uniting preparatory to chanting their ode.

tioned about the gate, no, not one. O come, thou saving god, to smooth the swelling waves of woe![1]

SEMICHO. II. Surely, were she dead, they would not be so still.

SEMICHO. I. Maybe her corpse is not yet from the house borne forth.

SEMICHO. II. Whence that inference? I am not so sanguine. What gives thee confidence?

SEMICHO. I. How could Admetus let his noble wife go unattended to the grave?

SEMICHO. II. Before the gates I see no lustral water from the spring, as custom doth ordain should be at the gates of the dead, no shorn lock lies on the threshold, which, as thou knowest, falls in mourning for the dead, no choir of maidens smites its youthful[2] palms together.

SEMICHO. I. And yet this is the appointed day.

SEMICHO. II. What meanest thou by this?

SEMICHO. I. The day appointed for the journey to the world below.

SEMICHO. II. Thou hast touched me to the heart, e'en to the soul.

CHO. Whoso from his youth up has been accounted virtuous, needs must weep to see the good suddenly cut off. 'Tis done; no single spot in all the world remains whither one might steer a course, either to Lycia[3] or to the parched abodes[4] of Ammon to release the hapless lady's soul; on comes death with step abrupt, nor know I to whom I should go of all who at the gods' altars offer sacrifice. Only the son of Phœbus,[5] if he yet saw this light of day—Ah! then

[1] *μετακόμιος*. Liddell and Scott "between two waves of misery," *i.e.* causing a short lull.

[2] Dindorf restores *πεαλής* for *πολαία*, a doubtful word, apparently not used as an adjective. Cf. Liddell and Scott.

[3] To a shrine of Apollo.

[4] The temple of Zeus Ammon in the deserts of Libya.

[5] Asclepius, who had been slain by Zeus, for raising the dead to life.

might she have left the dark abode and gates of Hades and have come again, for he would raise the dead to life, till that the thunderbolt's forked flame, hurled by Zeus, smote him. But now what further hope of life can I welcome to me? Our lords have ere this done all they could; on every altar streams the blood of abundant sacrifice; yet our sorrows find no cure.

Lo! from the house cometh a handmaid weeping; what shall I be told hath chanced? Grief may well be pardoned, if aught happeneth to one's master; yet I fain would learn whether our lady still is living or haply is no more.

MAID. Alive, yet dead thou may'st call her.

CHO. Why, how can the same person be alive, yet dead?

MAID. She is sinking even now, and at her last gasp.

CHO. My poor master! how sad thy lot to lose so good a wife!

MAID. He did not know his loss, until the blow fell on him.

CHO. Is there then no more a hope of saving her?

MAID. None; the fated day comes on so fast.

CHO. Are then the fitting rites already taking place o'er her body?

MAID. Death's garniture is ready, wherewith her lord will bury her.

CHO. Well let her know, though die she must, her fame ranks far above any other wife's beneath the sun.

MAID. Far above! of course it does; who will gainsay it? What must the woman be who hath surpassed her? For how could any wife have shown a clearer regard for her lord than by offering in his stead to die? Thus much the whole city knows right well; but thou shalt hear with wonder what she did within the house. For when she knew the fatal day was come, she washed her fair white skin with water from the stream, then from her cedar chests drew forth vesture and ornaments and robed herself becomingly; next,

standing before the altar-hearth, she prayed, "Mistress mine, behold! I pass beneath the earth; to thee in suppliant wise will I my latest prayer address; be mother to my orphans, and to my boy unite a loving bride, to my daughter a noble husband. Let them not die, as I, their mother, perish now, untimely in their youth, but let them live their glad lives out, happy in their native land." To every altar in Admetus' halls she went and crowned them and prayed, plucking from myrtle boughs their foliage, with never a tear or groan, nor did her coming trouble change the colour of her comely face. Anon into her bridal bower she burst, and then her tears brake forth and thus she cried, "O couch, whereon I loosed my maiden state for the man in whose cause I die, farewell! no hate I feel for thee; for me alone hast thou undone, dying as I die from fear of betraying thee and my lord. Some other wife will make thee hers, more blest maybe than me, but not more chaste." And she fell upon her knees and kissed it, till with her gushing tears the whole bed was wet. At last, when she had had her fill of weeping, she tore herself from the bed and hurried headlong forth, and oft as she was leaving the chamber turned she back and cast herself once more upon the couch; while her children were weeping as they clung to their mother's robes; but she took them each in turn in her arms and kissed them fondly, as a dying mother might. And all the servants in the house fell a-crying in sorrow for their mistress; but she held out her hand to each, nor was there one so mean but she gave him a word and took his answer back. Such are the sorrows in the halls of Admetus. Dying he had died once for all, but by avoiding death he hath a legacy of grief that he will ne'er forget.

Cho. Doubtless Admetus sorrows in this calamity, if he must lose so good a wife.

Maid. Ah yes! he weeps, holding in his arms his darling wife, and prays her not to leave him, impossible request!

for she is worn and wasted with illness, and lies[1] exhausted, a sad burden in his arms. Still, though her breath comes short and scant, she yearns to gaze yet on the sunshine, for nevermore, but now the last and latest time her eye shall see his radiant orb.[2] But I will go, thy presence to announce, for 'tis not all who have the goodwill to stand by their masters with kindly hearts in adversity. But thou of old hast been my master's friend.

Cho. O Zeus, what way out of these sorrows can be found? how can we loose the bonds of fate that bind our lord?

Comes some one forth? Am I at once to cut my hair, and cast the sable robe about me?

Too plainly, ay too plainly, friends; still let us to heaven pray; for the gods' power is very great.

O king Pæan, devise for Admetus some means of escape from his sorrows.

Yes, yes, contrive it; for thou in days gone by didst find salvation for him, so now be thou a saviour from the toils of death and stay bloodthirsty Hades.

Woe! woe! alas! Thou son of Pheres, woe! Ah, thy fate in losing thy wife!

Is not this enough to make thee slay thyself, ah! more than cause enough to tie the noose aloft and fit it to the neck?

Yea, for to-day wilt thou witness the death of her that was not merely dear, but dearest of the dear.

Look, look! she cometh even now, her husband with her, from the house.

Cry aloud and wail, O land of Pheræ, wail for the best of women, as with sickness worn she passes 'neath the earth to Hades, lord below.

[1] Elmsley was the first to detect that a line has probably been lost here, containing some finite verb to complete the sense, which I have endeavoured to give by introducing "lies" into my translation.

[2] These two lines, of frequent recurrence in Greek tragedy, are here rejected by Nauck.

Never, never will I say that marriage brings more joy than grief, as I conjecture by the past and witness these misfortunes of our king, for he when widowed of this noble wife will for the future lead a life that is no life at all.

ALC. O sun-god, lamp of day! O scudding clouds that dance along the sky!

ADM. He sees us both with anguish bowed, albeit guiltless of any crime against the gods, for the which thy death is due.

ALC. O earth, O sheltering roof, and ye my maiden chambers in my native land Iolcos!

ADM. Lift thyself, unhappy wife, forsake me not; entreat the mighty gods to pity us.

ALC. I see the two-oared skiff, I see it: and Charon, death's ferryman, his hand upon the boatman's pole, is calling me e'en now, "Why lingerest thou? Hasten. Thou art keeping me." Thus in his eager haste he hurries me.

ADM. Ah me! bitter to me is this voyage thou speakest of. Unhappy wife, what woes are ours!

ALC. One draws me, draws me hence, seest thou not? to the courts of death, winged Hades glaring from beneath his dark brows. What wilt thou with me? Unhand me. On what a journey am I setting out, most wretched woman I!

ADM. Bitter journey to thy friends, yet most of all to me and to thy babes, the partners in this sorrow.

ALC. Hands off! hands off at once!

Lay me down, I cannot stand. Hades standeth near; and with its gloom steals night upon my eyes.

O my children, my children, ye have no mother now. Fare ye well, my babes, live on beneath the light!

ADM. Woe is me! this is a message of sorrow to me, worse than aught that death can do. Steel not thy heart to leave me, I implore, by heaven, by thy babes whom thou wilt make orphans; nay, raise thyself, have courage. For if thou die I can no longer live; my life, my death are in thy hands; thy love is what I worship.

ALC. Admetus, lo! thou seest how it is with me; to thee I fain would tell my wishes ere I die. Thee I set before myself, and instead of living have ensured thy life, and so I die, though I need not have died for thee, but might have taken for my husband whom I would of the Thessalians, and have had a home blest with royal power; reft of thee, with my children orphans, I cared not to live, nor, though crowned with youth's fair gifts, wherein I used to joy, did I grudge them. Yet the father that begat thee, the mother that bare thee, gave thee up, though they had reached a time of life when to die were well, so saving thee their child, and winning noble death. For thou wert their only son, nor had they any hope, when thou wert dead, of other offspring. And I should have lived and thou the remnant of our days, nor wouldst thou have wept thy wife's loss, nor have had an orphan family. But some god hath caused these things to be even as they are. Enough! Remember thou the gratitude due to me for this; yea, for I shall never ask thee for an adequate return, for naught is prized more highly than our life; but just is my request, as thou thyself must say, since thou no less than I dost love these children, if so be thou think'st aright. Be content to let them rule my house, and do not marry a new wife to be a stepmother to these children, for she from jealousy, if so she be a woman worse than me, will stretch out her hand against the children of our union. Then do not this, I do beseech thee.[1] For the stepmother that succeeds, hateth children of a former match, cruel as the viper's are her tender mercies. A son, 'tis true, hath in his sire a tower of strength, [to whom he speaks and has his answer back];[2] but thou, my daughter, how shall thy maidenhood be passed in honour? What shall thy experience

[1] Nauck suspects this line, and Hirzel thinks the two next are spurious.

[2] Paley encloses this line in brackets as suspicious. Nauck omits it in his text.

be of thy father's wife? She may fasten on thee some foul report in thy youthful bloom, and frustrate thy marriage. Never shall thy mother lead thee to the bridal bed, nor by her presence in thy travail hearten thee, my child, when a mother's kindness triumphs over all. No, for I must die; and lo! this evil cometh to me not to-morrow nor yet on the third day of the month, but in a moment shall I be counted among the souls that are no more. Fare ye well, be happy; and thou, husband, canst boast thou hadst a peerless wife, and you, children, that you had such an one for mother.

Cho. Take heart; I do not hesitate to answer for him; he will perform all this, unless his mind should go astray.

Adm. It shall be so, fear not, it shall; alive thou wert the only wife I had, and dead shalt thou, none else, be called mine; no Thessalian maid shall ever take thy place and call me lord; not though she spring from lineage high nor though besides she be the fairest of her sex. Of children I have enough; god grant I may in them be blessed! for in thee has it been otherwise. No year-long mourning will I keep for thee, but all my life through, lady: loathing the mother that bare me, and hating my father, for they were friends in word but not in deed. But thou didst give thy dearest for my life and save it. May I not then mourn to lose a wife like thee? And I will put an end to revelry, to social gatherings o'er the wine, forego the festal crown and music which once reigned in my halls. For nevermore will I touch the lyre nor lift my soul in song to the Libyan flute, for thou hast taken with thee all my joy in life. But in my bed thy figure shall be laid full length, by cunning artists fashioned; thereon will I throw myself and, folding my arms about thee, call upon thy name, and think I hold my dear wife in my embrace, although I do not; chill comfort this, no doubt, but still I shall relieve my soul of its sad weight; and thou wilt come to me in dreams and gladden

me. For sweet it is to see our friends, come they when they will, e'en by night.

Had I the tongue, the tuneful voice of Orpheus to charm Demeter's daughter or her husband by my lay and bring thee back from Hades, I had gone down, nor Pluto's hound, nor Charon, ferryman of souls, whose hand is on the oar, had held me back, till to the light I had restored thee alive. At least do thou await me there, against the hour I die, prepare a home for me to be my true wife still. For in this same cedar coffin I will bid these children lay me with thee and stretch my limbs by thine; for never even in death may I be severed from thee, alone found faithful of them all.

CHO. Lo! I too will share with thee thy mourning for her, friend with friend; for this is but her due.

ALC. My children, ye with your own ears have heard your father's promise, that he will never wed another wife to set her over you, nor e'er dishonour me.

ADM. Yea, so I promise now, and accomplish it I will.

ALC. On these conditions receive the children from my hand.

ADM. I receive them, dear pledges by a dear hand given.

ALC. Take thou my place and be a mother to these babes.

ADM. Sore will be their need when they are reft of thee.

ALC. O my children, I am passing to that world below, when my life was needed most.

ADM. Ah me, what can I do bereft of thee?

ALC. Thy sorrow Time will soothe; 'tis the dead who are as naught.

ADM. Take me, O take me, I beseech, with thee 'neath the earth.

ALC. Enough that I in thy stead am dying.

ADM. O Destiny! of what a wife art thou despoiling me!

ALC. Lo! the darkness deepens on my drooping eyes.

ADM. Lost indeed am I, if thou, dear wife, wilt really leave me.

ALC. Thou mayst speak of me as naught, as one whose life is o'er.

ADM. Lift up thy face, leave not thy children.

ALC. 'Tis not my own free will; O my babes, farewell!

ADM. Look, look on them but once.

ALC. My end is come.

ADM. What mean'st thou? art leaving us?

ALC. Farewell!

ADM. Lost! lost! woe is me!

CHO. She is gone, the wife of Admetus is no more.

EUM. O my hard fate! My mother has passed to the realms below; she lives no more, dear father, 'neath the sun. Alas for her! she leaves us ere her time and to me bequeaths an orphan's life. Behold that staring eye, those nerveless hands! Hear me, mother, hear me, I implore! 'tis I who call thee now, I thy tender chick, printing my kisses on thy lips.

ADM. She cannot hear, she cannot see; a heavy blow hath fortune dealt us, you children and me.

EUM. O father, I am but a child to have my loving mother leave me here alone; O cruel my fate, alas! and thine, my sister, sharer in my cup of woe. Woe to thee, father! in vain, in vain didst thou take a wife and hast not reached the goal of eld with her; for she is gone before, and now that thou art dead, my mother, our house is all undone.

CHO. Admetus, these misfortunes thou must bear. Thou art by no means the first nor yet shalt be the last of men to lose a wife of worth; know this, we all of us are debtors unto death.

ADM. I understand; this is no sudden flight of ill hither; I was ware of it and long have pined. But since I am to carry the dead forth to her burial, stay here with me and to that inexorable god in Hades raise your antiphone. While

to all Thessalians in my realm I do proclaim a general mourning for this lady, with hair shorn off and robes of sable hue; all ye who harness steeds for cars, or single horses ride, cut off their manes with the sharp steel. Hush'd be every pipe, silent every lyre throughout the city till twelve full moons are past; for never again shall I bury one whom I love more, no! nor one more loyal to me; honour from me is her due, for she for me hath died, she and she alone.

[*Exeunt* ADMETUS *and* EUMELUS, *with the other children.*

CHO. Daughter of Pelias, be thine a happy life in that sunless home in Hades' halls! Let Hades know, that swarthy god, and that old man who sits to row and steer alike at his death-ferry, that he hath carried o'er the lake of Acheron in his two-oared skiff a woman peerless amidst her sex. Oft of thee the Muses' votaries shall sing on the seven-stringed mountain shell and in hymns that need no harp,[1] glorifying thee, oft as the season in his cycle cometh round at Sparta in that Carnean[2] month when all night long the moon sails high o'erhead, yea, and in splendid Athens, happy town. So glorious a theme has thy death bequeathed to tuneful bards. Would it were in my power and range to bring thee to the light from the chambers of Hades and the streams of Cocytus with the oar that sweeps yon nether flood! For thou, and thou alone, most dear of women, hadst the courage to redeem thy husband from Hades in exchange for thy own life. Light lie the earth above thee, lady! And if ever thy lord take to him a new wife, I vow he will earn my hatred and thy children's too. His mother had no heart to plunge into the darkness of the tomb for her

[1] *i.e.* Epic poetry.

[2] A reference to the Carnean festival, held in honour of Apollo, by the Dorians of Peloponnesus, especially by the Spartans, for nine successive days in the month Metageitnion, *i.e.* April, hence called the Carnean month.

son, no! nor his aged sire.[1] Their own child they had not the courage to rescue, the wretches! albeit they were grey-headed. But thou in thy youth and beauty hast died for thy lord and gone thy way. O be it mine to have for partner such a loving wife! for this lot is rare in life. Surely she should be my help-meet all my life and never cause one tear.

HER. Mine hosts, dwellers on this Pheræan soil! say, shall I find Admetus in the house?

CHO. The son of Pheres is within, Heracles. Tell me what need is bringing thee to the Thessalian land, to visit this city of the Pheræans?

HEC. I am performing a labour for Tirynthian Eurystheus.

CHO. And whither art thou journeying? on what wandering art thou forced to go?

HER. To fetch the chariot-steeds of Thracian Diomedes.

CHO. How canst thou? art a stranger to the ways of thy host?

HER. I am; for never yet have I gone to the land of the Bistones.

CHO Thou canst not master his horses without fighting.

HER. Still I cannot refuse these labours.

CHO. Then shalt thou slay them and return, or thyself be slain and stay there.

HER. It will not be the first hard course that I have run.

CHO. And what will be thy gain, suppose thou master their lord?

HER. The steeds will I drive away to the Tirynthian king.

CHO. No easy task to bit their jaws.

HER. Easy enough, unless their nostrils vomit fire.

CHO. With ravening jaws they rend the limbs of men.

HER. Thou speakest of the food of mountain beasts, not of horses.

CHO. Their mangers blood-bedabbled thou shalt see.

[1] A line is here wanting in the MSS., but its absence does not destroy the sense.

HER. Whose son doth he who feeds them boast to be?

CHO. Ares' son, king of the golden targe of Thrace.

HER. This toil again is but a piece of my ill-luck; hard it ever is and still is growing steeper, if I with Ares' own-begotten sons must fight, first with Lycaon, next with Cycnus, while now I am bound on this third contest to engage the horses and their master. Yet shall no man ever see Alcmena's son trembling at his foemen's prowess.

CHO. See where Admetus, lord of this land, comes in person from the palace forth.

ADM. Hail! son of Zeus, from Perseus sprung.

HER. Joy to thee also, Admetus, king of Thessaly.

ADM. Would there were! yet thy kindly heart I know full well.

HER. Why dost thou appear with head shorn thus in mourning?

ADM. To-day I am to bury one who is dead.

HER. Heaven avert calamity from thy children!

ADM. The children I have begotten are alive within my house.

HER. Thy father maybe is gone; well, he was ripe to go.

ADM. No, Heracles, he lives; my mother too.

HER. It cannot be thy wife is dead, thy Alcestis?

ADM. I can a twofold tale tell about her.

HER. Dost mean that she is dead, or living still?

ADM. She lives, yet lives no more; that is my grief.

HER. I am no wiser yet; thy words are riddles to me.

ADM. Knowest thou not the doom she must undergo?

HER. I know she did submit to die in thy stead.

ADM. How then is she still alive, if so she promised?

HER. Ah! weep not thy wife before the day, put that off till then.

ADM. The doomed is dead; the dead no more exists.

HER. Men count to be and not to be something apart.

ADM. Thy verdict this, O Heracles, mine another.

HER. Why weepest then? which of thy dear ones is the dead?

ADM. 'Tis a woman; I spoke of a woman just now.

HER. A stranger, or one of thine own kin?

ADM. A stranger, yet in another sense related to my house.

HER. How then came she by her death in house of thine?

Adm. Her father dead, she lived here as an orphan.

HER. Ah! would I had found thee free from grief, Admetus!

ADM. With what intent dost thou devise this speech?

HER. I will seek some other friendly hearth.

ADM. Never, O prince! Heaven forefend such dire disgrace!

HER. A guest is a burden to sorrowing friends, if come he should.

ADM. The dead are dead. Come in.

HER. To feast in a friend's house of sorrow is shameful.

ADM. The guest chambers lie apart, whereto we will conduct thee.

HER. Let me go; ten thousandfold shall be my thanks to thee.

ADM. Thou must not go to any other hearth. (*To a* Servant.) Go before, open the guest-rooms that face not these chambers, and bid my stewards see there is plenty of food; then shut the doors that lead into the courtyard; for 'tis not seemly that guests when at their meat should hear the voice of weeping or be made sad. [*Exit* HERACLES.

CHO. What doest thou? With such calamity before thee, hast thou the heart, Admetus, to welcome visitors? What means this folly?

ADM. Well, and if I had driven him from my house and city when he came to be my guest, wouldst thou have praised me more? No indeed! for my calamity would have been no whit less, while I should have been more churlish. And this would have been another woe to add to mine, that

my house should be called no friend to guests. Yea, and I find him myself the best of hosts whene'er to Argos' thirsty land I come.

Cho. Why then didst thou conceal thy present misfortune, if, as thy own lips declare, it was a friend that came?

Adm. He would never have entered my house, had he known aught of my distress. Maybe there are who think me but a fool for acting thus, and these will blame me; but my halls have never learnt to drive away or treat with scorn my guests.

Cho. O home of hospitality, thrown open by thy lord to all now and ever! In thee it was that Pythian Apollo, the sweet harper, deigned to make his home, and in thy halls was content to lead a shepherd's life, piping o'er the sloping downs shepherd's madrigals to thy flocks. And spotted lynxes couched amid his sheep in joy to hear his melody, and the lions' tawny troop left the glen of Othrys and came; came too the dappled fawn on nimble foot from beyond the crested pines and frisked about thy lyre, O Phœbus, for very joy at thy gladsome minstrelsy. And so it is thy lord inhabits a home rich in countless flocks by Bœbe's lovely mere, bounding his tilled corn-land and his level pastures with the clime of the Molossi near the sun's dark stable, and holding sway as far as the harbourless strand of the Ægean 'neath Pelion's shadow. Now too hath he opened wide his house and welcomed a guest although his eye is wet with tears in mourning for his wife so dear but lately dead within his halls; yea, for noble birth to noble feeling is inclined.[1] And in the good completest wisdom dwells; and at my heart sits the bold belief that heaven's servant will be blesed.

Adm. Men of Pheræ, kindly gathered here, lo! even now my servants are bearing the corpse with all its trappings

[1] In Nauck's text the word ἄγαμαι is here inserted, but it is omitted by Paley.

shoulder-high to the funeral pyre for burial; do ye, as custom bids, salute the dead on her last journey starting.

Cho. Look! I see thy father advancing with aged step, and servants too bearing in their arms adornment for thy wife, offerings for the dead.

Phe. My son, I come to share thy sorrow, for thou hast lost a noble, peerless wife; that no man will deny. Yet must thou needs bear this blow, hard though it be. Accept this garniture, and let it go beneath the earth, for rightly is her body honoured, since she died to save thy life, my son, and gave me back my child, suffering me not to lose thee and pine away in an old age of sorrow. Thus by the generous deed she dared, hath she made her life a noble example for all her sex. Farewell to thee, who hast saved this son of mine and raised me up when falling; be thine a happy lot even in Hades' halls! Such marriages I declare are gain to man, else to wed is not worth while.

Adm. Thou hast come uncalled by me to this burial, nor do I count thy presence as a friendly act. Never shall she be clad in any garniture of thine, nor[1] in her burial will she need aught of thine. Thou shouldst have shewn thy sympathy at the time my doom was sealed. But thou didst stand aloof and let another die, though thou wert old, the victim young; shalt thou then mourn the dead? Methinks thou wert no real sire of mine nor was she my true mother who calls herself and is called so, but[2] I was sprung of slave's blood and privily substituted at thy wife's breast. Brought to the test thou hast shewn thy nature; I cannot think I am thy child by birth.

By heaven, thou art the very pattern of cowards, who at thy age, on the borderland of life, wouldst not, nay! couldst not find the heart to die for thy own son; but ye, my parents, left to this stranger, whom I henceforth shall

[1] Nauck brackets this line as spurious.

[2] Nauck refuses to credit Euripides with lines 638 and 639.

justly hold e'en as mother and as father too, and none but her. And yet 'twas a noble exploit to achieve, to die to save thy son, and in any case the remnant of thy time to live was but short; and[1] I and she would have lived the days that were to be, nor had I lost my wife and mourned my evil fate. Moreover thou hast had all treatment that a happy man should have; in princely pomp thy youth was spent, thou hadst a son, myself, to be the heir of this thy home, so thou hadst no fear of dying childless and leaving thy house desolate, for strangers to pillage. Nor yet canst thou say I did dishonour thy old age and give thee up to die, seeing I have ever been to thee most dutiful, and for this thou, my sire, and she, my mother, have made me this return. Go then, get other sons to tend thy closing years, prepare thy body for the grave, and lay out thy corpse. For I will never bury thee with hand of mine; for I am dead for all thou didst for me; but if I found a saviour in another and still live, his son I say I am, and his fond nurse in old age will be. 'Tis vain, I see, the old man's prayer for death, his plaints at age and life's long weariness. For if death do but draw near, not one doth wish to die; old age no more they count so burdensome.

Cho. Peace! enough the present sorrow, O my son; goad not thy father's soul to fury.

Phe. Child, whom think'st thou art reviling? some Lydian or Phrygian bought with thy money? Art not aware I am a freeborn Thessalian, son of a Thessalian sire? Thou art too insolent; yet from hence thou shalt not go as thou camest, after shooting out thy braggart tongue at me. To rule my house I begat and bred thee up; I own no debt of dying in thy stead; this is not the law that I received from my ancestors that fathers should die for children, nor is it a custom in Hellas. For weal or woe, thy life must be thine own; whate'er was due from me to thee, thou hast. Dominion

[1] Lines 651 and 652 are bracketed by Nauck as spurious.

wide is thine, and acres broad I will leave to thee, for from my father did I inherit them. How, pray, have I wronged thee? of what am I robbing thee? Die not thou for me, nor I for thee. Thy joy is in the light; think'st thou thy sire's is not? By Heaven! 'tis a weary while, I trow, that time beneath the earth, and life, though short, is sweet. Thou at least didst struggle hard to 'scape thy death, lost to shame, and by her death dost live beyond thy destined term. Dost thou then speak of cowardice in me, thou craven heart! no match for thy wife, who hath died for thee, her fine young lord? A clever scheme hast thou devised to stave off death for ever, if thou canst persuade each new wife to die instead of thee; and dost thou then taunt thy friends, who will not do the like, coward as thou art thyself? Hold thy peace; reflect, if thou dost love thy life so well, this love by all is shared; yet if thou wilt speak ill of me, thyself shalt hear a full and truthful list of thy own crimes.

CHO. Too long that list both now and heretofore; cease, father, to revile thy son.

ADM. Say on, for I have said my say; but if it vexes thee to hear the truth, thou shouldst not have sinned against me.

PHE. My sin had been the deeper, had I died for thee.

ADM. What! is it all one for young or old to die?

PHE. To live one life, not twain, is all our due.

ADM. Outlive then Zeus himself!

PHE. Dost curse thy parents, though unharmed by them?

ADM. Yea, for I see thy heart is set on length of days.

PHE. Is it not to save thyself thou art carrying to the tomb this corpse?

ADM. A proof of thy cowardice, thou craven heart!

PHE. At any rate her death was not due to me; this thou canst not say.

ADM. Ah! mayst thou some day come to need my aid!

PHE. Woo many wives, that there may be the more to die.

ADM. That is thy reproach, for thou didst refuse to die.

PHE. Dear is the light of the sun-god, dear to all.

ADM. A coward soul is thine, not to be reckoned among men.

PHE. No laughing now for thee at bearing forth my aged corpse.

ADM. Thy death will surely be a death of shame, come when it will.

PHE. Once dead I little reck of foul report.

ADM. Alas! how void of shame the old can be!

PHE. Hers was no want of shame; 'twas want of sense in her that thou didst find.

ADM. Begone! and leave me to bury my dead.

PHE. I go; bury thy victim, thyself her murderer. Her kinsmen yet will call for an account. Else surely has Acastus ceased to be a man, if he avenge not on thee his sister's blood.

ADM. Perdition seize thee and that wife of thine! grow old, as ye deserve, childless, though your son yet lives, for ye shall never enter the same abode with me; nay! were it needful I should disown thy paternal hearth by heralds' voice, I had disowned it. (*Exit* PHERES). Now, since we must bear our present woe, let us go and lay the dead upon the pyre. [*Exit* ADMETUS.

CHO. Woe, woe for thee! Alas, for thy hardihood! Noble spirit, good beyond compare, farewell! May Hermes in the nether world, and Hades, too, give thee a kindly welcome! and if even in that other life the good are rewarded, mayst thou have thy share therein and take thy seat by Hades' bride!

ATT. Many the guests ere now from every corner of the world I have seen come to the halls of Admetus, for whom I have spread the board, but never yet have I welcomed to this hearth a guest so shameless as this; a man who, in the first place, though he saw my master's grief, yet entered and

presumed to pass the gates, then took what cheer we had in no sober spirit, though he knew our sorrow; no! was there aught we failed to bring? he called for it. Next in his hands he took a goblet of ivy-wood and drank the pure juice of the black grape, till the mounting fumes of wine heated him, and he crowned his head with myrtle-sprays, howling discordantly, while two-fold strains were there to hear, for he would sing without a thought for the troubles in Admetus' halls, while we servants mourned our mistress, though we did not let the stranger see our streaming eyes, for such was the bidding of Admetus. So now here am I entertaining as a guest some miscreant thief maybe, or robber, while she is gone forth from the house, nor did I follow her nor stretch my hand towards her bier, in mourning for my lady, who, to me and all her servants, was a mother, for she would save us from countless trouble, appeasing her husband's angry mood. Have I not good cause then to loathe this guest who cometh in our hour of woe?

Her. Ho! sirrah, why that solemn, thoughtful look? 'Tis not the way for servants to scowl on guests, but with courteous soul to welcome them. But thou, seeing a friend of thy master arrive, receivest him with sullen, lowering brow, though 'tis but a stranger that is the object of thy mourning. Come hither, that thou too mayst learn more wisdom. Dost know the nature of this mortal state? I trow not; how shouldst thou? Well, lend an ear to me. Death is the common debt of man; no mortal really knows if he will live to see the morrow's light; for Fortune's issues are not in our ken, beyond the teacher's rule they lie, no art can master them. Hearken then to this and learn of me, be merry, drink thy cup, and count the present day thine own, the rest to Fortune yield. And to Cypris too, sweetest of the gods by far to man, thy tribute pay, for kindly is her mood. Let be those other cares, and heed my counsel if thou think'st I speak aright; methinks I do. Come, banish

this excessive grief, and drink a cup with me when thou hast passed beyond these doors and wreathed thy brow: and I feel sure the plash of wine within the cup will bring thee to a better haven from this crabbed mood, this cabined state of mind.[1] Mortals we are, and mortals' thoughts should have; for all they who frown and scowl do miss,—leastways I think so,—the true life and get themselves misfortune.

ATT. I know all that, but our present state has little claim on revelry or laughter.

HER. The dead was a stranger woman; grieve not to excess; for the rulers of thy house are living.

ATT. How, living? Thou knowest not the trouble in the house.

HER. I do, unless thy master did in aught deceive me.

ATT. Too hospitable is he.

HER. Was I to miss good cheer because a stranger had died?

ATT. A stranger surely! quite a stranger she!

HER. Is there some trouble that he withheld from me?

ATT. Farewell, go thy way! my master's troubles are my care.

HER. This word of thine heralds not a grief for strangers felt.

ATT. Had it been, the sight of thy merriment had not grieved me so.

HER.[2] Can it be mine host hath strangely wronged me?

ATT. Thou camest at no proper time for our house to welcome thee, for sorrow is come upon us; lo! thou seest our shorn heads and robes of sable hue.

HER. Who is it that is dead? Is it a child or his aged sire that hat hath passed away?

ATT. Nay, sir guest, 'tis Admetus' wife that is no more.

[1] Reading *φρενῶν*, which Nauck, however, doubts.

[2] There is some doubt whether the next four lines are genuine, Nauck brackets them.

HER. What sayest thou? and did ye then in spite of that admit me to your cheer?

ATT. Yes, for his regard would not let him send thee from his door.

HER. Unhappy husband, what a wife hast thou lost!

ATT. We are all undone, not she alone.

HER. I knew it when I saw his streaming eye, shorn head and downcast look, yet did he persuade me, saying it was a stranger he was bearing to burial. So I did constrain myself and passed his gates and sat drinking in his hospitable halls, when he was suffering thus. And have I wreathed my head and do I revel still? But—thou to hold thy peace when such a crushing sorrow lay upon the house! Where is he burying her? Whither shall I go to find her?

ATT. Beside the road that leadeth straight to Larissa, shalt thou see her carved tomb outside the suburb.

HER. O heart, O soul, both sufferers oft, now show the mettle of that son Tirynthian Alcmena, daughter of Electryon, bare to Zeus. For I must save this woman, dead but now, setting Alcestis once again within this house, and to Admetus this kind service render. So I will go and watch for death the black-robed monarch of the dead, and him methinks I shall find as he drinks of the blood-offering near the tomb. And if, from ambush rushing, once I catch and fold him in my arms' embrace, none shall ever wrest him thence with smarting ribs, ere he give up the woman unto me. But should I fail to find my prey and he come not to the clotted blood, I will go to the sunless home of those beneath the earth, to Persephone and her king, and make to them my prayer, sure that I shall bring Alcestis up again, to place her in the hands of him, my host, who welcomed me to his house nor drove me thence, though fortune smote him hard, but this his noble spirit strove to hide out of regard for me. What host more kind than him in Thessaly? or in

the homes of Hellas? Wherefore shall he never say his generous deeds were lavished on a worthless wretch.

[*Exeunt* HERACLES *and* Servant.

ADM. Ah me! I loathe this entering in, and loathe to see my widowed home. Woe, woe is me! Whither shall I go? Where stand? what say? or what suppress? Would God that I were dead! Surely in an evil hour my mother gave me birth. The dead I envy, and would fain be as they, and long to dwell within their courts. No joy to me to see the light, no joy to tread the earth; such a hostage death hath reft me of and handed o'er to Hades.

CHO. Move forward, go within the shelter of thy house.

ADM. Woe is me!

CHO. Thy sufferings claim these cries of woe.

ADE. Ah me!

CHO. Through anguish hast thou gone, full well I know.

ADM. Alas! alas!

CHO. Thou wilt not help the dead one whit.

ADM. O misery!

CHO. Nevermore to see thy dear wife face to face is grief indeed.

ADM. Thy words have probed the sore place in my heart. What greater grief can come to man than the loss of a faithful wife? Would I had never married or shared with her my home! I envy those 'mongst men who have nor wife nor child. Theirs is but one life; to grieve for that is no excessive burden; but to see children fall ill and bridal beds emptied by death's ravages is too much to bear, when one might go through life without wife or child.

CHO. A fate we cannot cope with is come upon us.

ADM. Woe is me!

CHO. But thou to sorrow settest no limit.

ADM. Ah! ah!

CHO. 'Tis hard to bear, but still—

ADM. Woe is me!

CHO. Thou art not the first to lose—

ADM. O! woe is me!

CHO. A wife; misfortune takes a different shape for every man she plagues.

ADM. O the weary sorrow! O the grief for dear ones dead and gone! Why didst thou hinder me from plunging into the gaping grave, there to lay me down and die with her, my peerless bride? Then would Hades for that one have gotten these two faithful souls at once, crossing the nether lake together.

CHO. I had a kinsman once, within whose home died his only son, worthy of a father's tears; yet in spite of that he bore his grief resignedly, childless though he was, his hair already turning grey, himself far on in years, upon life's downward track.

ADM. O house of mine, how can I enter thee? how can I live here, now that fortune turns against me? Ah me! How wide the gulf 'twixt then and now! Then with torches cut from Pelion's pines, with marriage hymns I entered in, holding my dear wife's hand; and at our back a crowd of friends with cheerful cries, singing the happy lot of my dead wife and me, calling us a noble pair made one, children both of highborn lineage; but now the voice of woe instead of wedding hymns, and robes of black instead of snowy white usher me into my house to my deserted couch.

CHO Hard upon prosperous fortune came this sorrow to thee, a stranger to adversity; yet hast thou saved thy soul alive. Thy wife is dead and gone; her love she leaves with thee. What new thing is here? Death ere now from many a man hath torn a wife.

ADM. My friends, I count my dead wife's lot more blest than mine, for all it seems not so; for nevermore can sorrow touch her for ever; all her toil is over, and glorious is her fame. While I, who had no right to live, have passed the bounds of fate only to live a life of misery; I know it now.

For how shall I endure to enter this my house? Whom shall I address, by whom be answered back, to find[1] aught joyful in my entering in? Whither shall I turn? Within the desolation will drive me forth, whensoe'er I see my widowed couch, the seat whereon she sat, the floor all dusty in the house, and my babes falling at my knees with piteous tears for their mother, while my servants mourn the good mistress their house hath lost. These are the sorrows in my home, while abroad the marriages among Thessalians and the thronging crowds of women will drive me mad,[2] for I can never bear to gaze upon the compeers of my wife. And whoso is my foe will taunt me thus, "Behold him living in his shame, a wretch who quailed at death himself, but of his coward heart gave up his wedded wife instead, and escaped from Hades; doth he deem himself a man after that? And he loathes his parents, though himself refused to die." Such ill report shall I to my evils add. What profit, then, my friends, for me to live, in fame and fortune ruined.

Cho. Myself have traced the Muses' path, have soared amid the stars, have laid my hold on many a theme, and yet have found naught stronger than necessity, no spell inscribed on Thracian tablets written there by Orpheus, the sweet singer, no! nor aught among the simples culled by Phœbus for the toiling race of men, and given to Asclepius' sons. The only goddess she, whose altar or whose image man cannot approach; victims she heedeth not. O come not to me, dread goddess, in greater might than heretofore in my career. Even Zeus requires thy aid to bring to pass whatso he wills. Thou too it is that by sheer force dost bend the steel among the Chalybes; nor is there any pity in thy relentless nature.

This is the goddess that hath gripped thee too in chains thou canst not 'scape; yet steel thy heart, for all thy weeping ne'er will bring to light again the dead from the realms

[1] Nauck brackets this line as spurious. [2] Or, "drive me away."

below. Even sons of gods perish in darkness[1] in the hour of death. We loved her while she was with us, we love her still though dead; noblest of her sex was she, the wife thou tookest to thy bed. Her tomb let none regard as the graves of those who die and are no more, but let her have honours equal with the gods, revered by every traveller; and many a one will cross the road and read this verse aloud, "This is she that died in days gone by to save her lord; now is she a spirit blest. Hail, lady revered; be kind to us!" Such glad greeting shall she have. But see, Admetus! yonder, I believe, comes Alcmena's son toward thy hearth.

HER. Admetus, to a friend we should speak freely, not hold our peace and harbour in our hearts complaints. I came to thee in thy hour of sorrow and claimed the right to prove myself thy friend, but thou wouldst not tell me that she, thy wife, lay stretched in death: but didst make me a welcome guest in thy halls, as though thy whole concern was centred on a stranger's loss. So I crowned my head and poured drink-offerings to the gods in that thy house of sorrow. Wherefore I do blame thee for this treatment of me, yet would not grieve thee in thy trouble. So now the reason I have turned my steps and come hither again, I will tell. This lady take and keep for me until I come bringing hither the steeds of Thrace, after I have slain the lord of the Bistones. But should I fare as fare I fain would not, I give her to thee to serve within thy halls. With no small toil she came into my hands. 'Twas thus: I found folk just appointing an open contest for athletes, well worth a struggle, and there I won her as a prize and brought her thence; now those who were successful in the lighter contests had horses for their prize, but those who conquered in severer feats, in boxing and wrestling, won herds of oxen, and this woman was to be added thereto; with such a chance 'twere shame indeed to pass so fair

[1] σκότιοι, or "the sons of gods by mortal women."

a guerdon by. So thou must take her in thy charge, as I said; for not by theft but honest toil I won the prize I bring; and maybe e'en thou in time wilt thank me.

Adm. 'Twas not because of any slight or unkind thought of thee that I concealed my wife's sad fate; but this were adding grief to grief if thou hadst gone from hence to the halls of some other friend; and it sufficed that I should mourn my sorrow. But I do beseech thee, prince, if 'tis possible, bid some other Thessalian, one who hath not suffered as I have, keep the maiden for thee,—and thou hast many friends in Pheræ; remind me not of my misfortune. For I could not see her in my house and stay my tears. Oh! add not new affliction to my stricken heart, for sure by sorrow am I bowed enough. And where within my halls could a tender maiden live? for such she is, as her dress and vesture show. Is she to dwell where men consort? Then how shall she retain her maiden purity, if 'mid our youths she come and go? O Heracles, it is no easy task to check a young man's fancy, and I am anxious for thy sake. Or am I to take her to my dead wife's bower and care for her? How can I bring her there to fill the other's bed? Twofold reproach I fear; first, some fellow-townsman may taunt me with betraying my benefactress in eagerness to wed a new young bride; next, there is my dead wife, whom I should much regard, for she doth merit all my reverence. Thou too, lady, whosoe'er thou art, believe me, art the very counterfeit presentment of Alcestis, the picture of her form, ah me! O take this maiden, I conjure thee, from my sight; slay me not already slain. For in her I seem once more to see my wife; and my heart is darkly troubled, and the fountains of my eyes are loosed. Ah, woe is me! Now do I taste the bitterness of this my grief.

Cho. Indeed I cannot call thy fortune blest, yet heaven's gift must thou endure, whoe'er the god that comes to bring it.

HER. Would I had the power to bring thy wife up to the light from the halls of death, and confer this kindness on thee!

ADM. Right well I know thou wouldst. But what of that? The dead can never come to life again.

HER. Do not exceed the mark, but bear thy grief with moderation.

ADM. 'Tis easier to advise than to suffer and endure.

HER. Yet what thy gain, if thou for aye wilt mourn?

ADM. I too know that myself, but some strange yearning leads me on.

HER. Love for the dead compels a tear.

ADM. Her death was mine, more than any words of mine can tell.

HER. Thou hast lost a noble wife; who shall gainsay it?

ADM. Life henceforth hath lost all charm for me.

HER. Time will soothe the smart; as yet thy grief is young.

ADM. "Time!" use that word, if death and time are one.

HER. A new wife and a longing for a fresh marriage will stay thy sorrow.

ADM. Peace! What words are thine? I ne'er of thee had thought it.

HER. What! wilt never wed, but preserve thy widowed state?

ADM. There is no woman living that shall share my couch.

HER. Dost think that this will help the dead at all?

ADM. My reverence she deserves, where'er she is.

HER. I praise thee, yes; but still thou bringest on thyself the charge of folly.

ADM. So that thou never call'st me bridegroom, praise me if thou wilt.

HER. I praise thee for thy loyalty to thy wife.

ADM. Come death! if ever I betray her, dead though she be.

HER. Well, take this maiden to the shelter of thy noble house.

ADM. Spare me, I entreat thee by Zeus, thy sire.

HER. Be sure, if thou refuse, 'twill be a sad mistake.

ADM. If I comply, remorse will gnaw my heart.

HER. Yield; for in god's good time maybe thou wilt give me thanks.

ADM. Ah! would thou hadst never won her in the games!

HER. Yet thou too sharest in my victory.

ADM. True; still let this maiden go away.

HER. Go she shall, if go she must; but first see if this is needful.

ADM. I needs must, else wilt thou be wroth with me.

HER. I have a reason good to press the matter thus.

ADM. Have thy way then. Yet know well thy deed I disapprove.

HER. A day will come that thou wilt praise me; only yield.

ADM. (*to his servants*). Take her in, if I needs must give her welcome in my house.

HER. To thy servants will I not hand her over.

ADM. Conduct her then thyself within, if so thou thinkest good.

HER. Nay, but into thy hands shall mine consign her.

ADM. I will not touch her, though she is free to go within my halls.

HER. To thy hand, and thine alone I her entrust.

ADM. Prince, against my will thou dost constrain me to this deed.

HER. Boldly stretch out thy hand and touch the stranger maid.

ADM. There, then, I stretch it out as toward the Gorgon's severed head.[1]

HER. Hast hold of her?

ADM. I have.

HER. (*removes the veil*). So; keep her safely then, and in days to come thou wilt confess the son of Zeus proved himself a noble guest. Look well at her, if haply to thy gaze she have a semblance of thy wife; and now that thou art blest, cease from sorrowing.

ADM. Great gods, what shall I say? a marvel past all hope is here! My wife, my own true wife I see, or is some mocking rapture sent by heaven to drive me mad?

HER. No, no; 'tis thy own wife thou seest here.

ADM. Beware it be not a phantom from that nether world.

HER. No necromancer was this guest whom thou didst welcome.

ADM. Do I behold my wife, her whom I buried?

HER. Be well assured thereof; still I marvel not thou dost distrust thy luck.

ADM. May I touch her, may I speak to her as my living wife?

HER. Speak to her. For thou hast all thy heart's desire.

ADM. O form and features of my well-loved wife! past all hope I hold thee, never expecting to see thee again.

HER. So thou dost; may no jealous god rise against thee!

ADM. O noble son of almighty Zeus, good luck to thee! may the father that begat thee hold thee in his keeping; for thou and none else hast raised my fallen fortunes. How

[1] Lobeck, whom Nauck follows, to avoid the elision of the final ι of the dative singular, conjectured Γοργόν' ὡς καρατομῶν "as if beheading a Gorgon," *i.e.* with averted gaze, thus gaining very considerable point. Paley notices the clever suggestion, without however adopting it.

didst thou bring her from the world below to this light of day?

HER. By encountering the god[1] who had her in his power.

ADM. Where didst thou engage with Death? tell me this.

HER. Just by the tomb I from my ambush sprang and caught him in my grip.

ADM. But why thus speechless stands my wife?

HER. 'Tis not lawful yet for thee to hear her speak, ere she be purified from the gods below and the third day be come. So lead her in; and hereafter, e'en as now, be just and kind to guests, Admetus. Now farewell! for I must go to perform my appointed task for the lordly son of Sthenelus.

ADM. Abide with us and be our welcome guest.

HER. Another time; now must I use all haste.

ADM. Good luck to thee! and mayst thou come again! To the citizens and all my realm I make this proclamation, that they institute dances in honour of the glad event, and make the altars steam with sacrifice, and offer prayers; for now have I moored my bark of life in a happier haven than before, and so will own myself a happy man.

CHO. Many are the shapes that fortune takes, and oft the gods bring things to pass beyond our expectation. That which we deemed so sure is not fulfilled, while for that we never thought would be, God finds out a way. And such hath been the issue in the present case.

[1] Reading *δαιμόνων τῷ κυρίῳ*. Nauck has *κοιράνῳ*—apparently regarding the Death-god as supreme over all deities, but surely this is incorrect. Jacobs, seeing the difficulty, conjectured *νερτέρων*. But the translation in the text seems a possible one, and makes the emendation unnecessary.

HERACLEIDÆ.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

IOLAUS.
COPREUS.
DEMOPHON.
MACARIA.
SERVANT (OF HYLLUS).
ALCMENA.
MESSENGER.
EURYSTHEUS.
CHORUS OF AGED ATHENIANS.

SCENE.—Before the altar of Zeus at Marathon.

IOL. I hold this true, and long have held: Nature hath made one man upright for his neighbours' good, while another hath a disposition wholly given over to gain, useless alike to the state and difficult to have dealings with, but for himself the best of men; and this I know, not from mere hearsay. I, for instance, from pure regard and reverence for my kith and kin, though I might have lived at peace in Argos, alone of all my race shared with Heracles his labours, while he was yet with us, and now that he dwells in heaven, I keep these his children safe beneath my wing, though myself I need protection. For when their father passed from earth away, Eurystheus would first of all have slain us, but we escaped. And though our home is lost, our life was saved. But in exile we wander from city to city, ever forced to roam. For, added to our former wrongs, Eurystheus thought it fit to put this further outrage upon us: wheresoe'er he heard that we were settling, thither would he send heralds demanding our surrender and driving us from thence, holding[1] out this threat, that Argos is no mean city to make a friend or foe, and furthermore pointing to his own prosperity. So they, seeing how weak my means, and these little ones left without a father, bow to his superior might and drive us from their land. And I share the exile of these children, and help them bear their evil lot by my sympathy, loth to betray them, lest someone

[1] Reading *προτείνων* (Canter's emendation of *προτιμῶν* MS.).

say, "Look you! now that the children's sire is dead, Iolaus no more protects them, kinsman though he is." Not one corner left us in the whole of Hellas, we are come to Marathon and its neighbouring land, and here we sit as suppliants at the altars of the gods, and pray their aid; for 'tis said two sons of Theseus dwell upon these plains, the lot of their inheritance, scions of Pandion's stock, related to these children; this the reason we have come on this our way to the borders of glorious Athens. To lead the flight two aged guides are we; my care is centred on these boys, while she, I mean Alcmena, clasps her son's daughter in her arms, and bears her for safety within this shrine, for we shrink from letting tender maidens[1] come anigh the crowd or stand as suppliants at the altar. Now Hyllus and the elder of his brethren are seeking some place for us to find a refuge, if we are driven by force from this land. O children, children, come hither! hold unto my robe; for lo! I see a herald coming towards us from Eurystheus, by whom we are persecuted, wanderers excluded from every land. A curse on thee and him that sent thee, hateful wretch! for that same tongue of thine hath oft announced its master's evil hests to these children's noble sire as well.

Cop. Doubtless thy folly lets thee think this is a good position to have taken up, and that thou art come to a city that will help thee. No! there is none that will prefer thy feeble arm to the might of Eurystheus. Begone! why take this trouble? Thou must arise and go to Argos, where awaits thee death by stoning.

Iol. Not so, for the god's altar will protect me, and this land of freedom, wherein we have set foot.

Cop. Wilt give me the trouble of laying hands on thee?

Iol. By force at least shalt thou never drag these children hence.

[1] Tradition only assigned one daughter, Macaria, to the hero. παρθένους is to be understood quite generally.

Cop. That shalt thou soon learn; it seems thou wert a poor prophet, after all, in this.

[Copreus *here seizes the children.*

Iol. This shall never happen while I live.

Cop. Begone! for I will take them hence, for all thy refusals, for I hold [1] that they belong to Eurystheus, as they do indeed.

Iol. Help, ye who long have had your home in Athens! we suppliants at Zeus' altar in your market-place are being haled by force away, our sacred wreaths defiled, shame to your city, to the gods dishonour.

Cho. Hark, hark! What cry is this that rises near the altar? At once explain the nature of the trouble.

Iol. See this aged frame hurled in its feebleness upon the ground! Woe is me!

Cho. Who threw thee down thus pitiably?

Iol. Behold the man who flouts your gods, kind sirs, and tries by force to drag me from my seat before the altar of Zeus.

Cho. From what land, old stranger, art thou come to this confederate state of four cities? or have ye left Eubœa's cliffs, and, with the oar that sweeps the sea, put in here from across the firth? [2]

Iol. Sirs, no island life I lead, but from Mycenæ to thy land I come.

Cho. What do they call thee, aged sir, those folk in Mycenæ?

Iol. Maybe ye have heard of Iolaus, the comrade of Heracles, for he was not unknown to fame.

Cho. Yea, I have heard of him in bygone days; but tell me, whose are the tender boys thou bearest in thine arms?

Iol. These, sirs, are the sons of Heracles, come as suppliants to you and your city.

[1] Elmsley, followed by Nauck, reads *κομίζων*.

[2] *i.e.* the Euripus between Eubœa and Attica.

Cho. What is their quest? Are they anxious, tell me, to obtain an audience of the state?

Iol. That so they may escape surrender, nor be torn with violence from thy altars, and brought to Argos.

Cop. Nay, this will nowise satisfy thy masters, who o'er thee have a right, and so have tracked thee hither.

Cho. Stranger, 'tis but right we should reverence the gods' suppliants, suffering none with violent hand to make them[1] leave the altars, for that will dread Justice ne'er permit.

Cop. Do thou then drive these subjects of Eurystheus forth, and this hand of mine shall abstain from violence.

Cho. 'Twere impious for the state to neglect the suppliant stranger's prayer.

Cop. Yet 'tis well to keep clear of troubles, by adopting that counsel, which is the wiser.

Cho. Thou then shouldst have told the monarch of this land thy errand before being so bold, out of regard to his country's freedom, instead of trying to drag strangers by force from the altars of the gods.

Cop. Who is monarch of this land and state?

Cho. Demophon, son of gallant Theseus.

Cop. Surely it were most to the purpose to discuss this matter somewhat with him; all else has been said in vain.

Cho. Lo! here he comes in person, in hot haste, and Acamas his brother, to hear what thou hast to say.

Dem. Since thou for all thy years hast outstripped younger men in coming to the rescue to this altar of Zeus, do thou tell me what hath chanced to bring this crowd together.

Cho. There sit the sons of Heracles as suppliants, having wreathed the altar, as thou seest, O king, and with them is Iolaus, trusty comrade of their sire.

[1] Reading σφε (Musgrave) for MS. σε. Schmidt, τάδ' ἀλιτεῖν σ' ἔδη "thee (*i.e.* Copreus) to transgress against."

DEM. Why should this event have called for cries of pain?

CHO. (*turning to* COPREUS). This fellow caused the uproar by trying to drag them forcibly from this altar, and he tripped up the old man, till my tears for pity flowed.

DEM. Hellenic dress and fashion in his robes doth he no doubt adopt, but deeds like these betray the barbarian. Thou, sirrah, tell me straight the country whence thou camest thither.

COP. An Argive I; since that thou seek'st to know. Who sent me, and the object of my coming, will I freely tell. Eurystheus, king of Mycenæ, sends me hither to fetch these back; and I have come, sir stranger, with just grounds in plenty, alike for speech or action. An Argive myself, Argives I come to fetch, taking with me these runaways from my native city, on whom the doom of death was passed by our laws there; and we have a right, since we rule our city independently, to ratify its sentences. And though they have come as suppliants to the altars of numerous others, we have taken our stand on these same arguments, and no one has ventured to bring upon himself evils of his own getting. But they have come hither, either because they perceived some folly in thee, or, in their perplexity, staking all on one risky throw to win or lose; for surely they do not suppose that thou, if so thou hast thy senses still, and only thou, in all the breadth of Hellas they have traversed, wilt pity their foolish troubles. Come now, put argument against argument: what will be thy gain, suppose thou admit them to thy land, or let us take them hence? From us these benefits are thine to win: this city can secure as friends Argos, with its far-reaching arm, and Eurystheus' might complete; whilst if thou lend an ear to their piteous pleading and grow soft, the matter must result in trial of arms; for be sure we shall not yield this struggle without appealing to the sword. What pretext wilt thou urge? Of what

domains art thou robbed that thou shouldst take and wage war with the Tirynthian Argives? What kind of allies art thou aiding? For[1] whom will they have fallen whom thou buriest? Surely thou wilt get an evil name from the citizens, if for the sake of an old man with one foot in the grave, a mere shadow I may say, and for these children, thou wilt plunge into troublous waters. The best[2] thou canst say is, that thou wilt find in them a hope, and nothing more; and yet this falls far short of the present need; for these would be but a poor match for Argives even when fully armed and in their prime, if haply that raises thy spirits; moreover, the time 'twixt now and then is long, wherein ye may be blotted out. Nay, hearken to me; give me naught, but let me take mine own, and so gain Mycenæ; but forbear to act now, as is your Athenian way, and take the weaker side, when it is in thy power to choose the stronger as thy friends.

Cho. Who can decide a cause or ascertain its merits, till from both sides he clearly learn what they would say?

Iol. O king, in thy land I start with this advantage, the right to hear and speak in turn, and none, ere that, will drive me hence as elsewhere they would. 'Twixt us and him is naught in common, for we no longer have aught to do with Argos since that decree was passed, but we are exiles from our native land; how then can he justly drag us back as subjects of Mycenæ,[3] seeing that they have banished us? For we are strangers. Or do ye claim that every exile from Argos is exiled from the bounds of Hellas? Not

[1] Nauck brackets this sentence as spurious.

[2] *i.e.* a hope that they will do the same for you in your hour of need. Jebb suggested (Cf. Jerram) Ἐρῶ τὸ λῷστον· ἐλπιδ' εὑρήσει μόνον "I will put your case in the best light: you will find hope and nothing more." A most tempting elucidation of a very puzzling passage.

[3] Mycenæ and Argos are used indiscriminately, in the same way that Euripides elsewhere speaks of Greeks as Argives, Achæans, Hellenes, etc., without distinction.

from Athens surely; for ne'er will she for fear of Argos drive the children of Heracles from her land. Here is no Trachis, not at all; no! nor that Achæan town, whence thou, defying justice, but boasting of the might of Argos in the very words thou now art using, didst drive the suppliants from their station at the altar. If this shall be, and they thy words approve, why then I trow this is no more Athens, the home of freedom. Nay, but I know the temper and nature of these citizens; they would rather die, for honour ranks before mere life with men of worth. Enough of Athens! for excessive praise is apt to breed disgust; and oft ere now I have myself felt vexed at praise that knows no bounds. But to thee, as ruler of this land, I fain would show the reason why thou art bound to save these children. Pittheus was the son of Pelops; from him sprung Æthra, and from her Theseus thy sire was born. And now will I trace back these children's lineage for thee. Heracles was son of Zeus and Alcmena; Alcmena sprang from Pelops' daughter; therefore thy father and their father would be the sons of first cousins. Thus then art thou to them related, O Demophon, but thy just debt to them beyond the ties of kinship do I now declare to thee; for I assert, in days gone by, I was with Theseus on the ship, as their father's squire, when they went to fetch that girdle fraught with death; yea, and from Hades' murky dungeons did Heracles bring thy father up; as all Hellas doth attest. [[1] Wherefore in return they crave this boon of thee, that they be not surrendered up nor torn by force from the altars of thy gods and cast forth from the land. For this were shame on thee, and [2] hurtful likewise in thy state, should suppliants, exiles, kith and kin of thine, be haled away by force. For pity's

[1] The following six lines have been condemned by the joint verdict of Paley, Porson, and Dindorf.

[2] This line as it stands has a syllable too many for the metre. Hermann omits τε. Wecklein inserts τῇ and omits κακόν.

sake! cast one glance at them.] I do entreat thee, laying my suppliant bough upon thee, by thy hands and beard, slight not the sons of Heracles, now that thou hast them in thy power to help. Show thyself their kinsman and their friend; be to them father, brother, lord; for better each and all of these than to fall beneath the Argives' hand.

Cho. O king, I pity them, hearing their sad lot. Now more than ever do I see noble birth o'ercome by fortune; for these, though sprung from a noble sire, are suffering what they ne'er deserved.

Dem. Three aspects of the case constrain me, Iolaus, not to spurn the guests thou bringest; first and foremost, there is Zeus, at whose altar thou art seated with these tender children gathered round thee; next come ties of kin, and the debt I owe to treat them kindly for their father's sake; and last, mine honour, which before all I must regard; for if I permit this altar to be violently despoiled by stranger hands, men will think the land I inhabit is free no more, and that through fear[1] I have surrendered suppliants to Argives, and this comes nigh to make one hang oneself. Would that thou hadst come under a luckier star! yet, as it is, fear not that any man shall tear thee and these children from the altar by force. Get thee (*to* Copreus) to Argos and tell Eurystheus so; yea and more, if he have any charge against these strangers, he shall have justice; but never shalt thou drag them hence.

Cop. Not even if I have right upon my side and prove my case?

Dem. How can it be right to drag the suppliant away by force?

Cop. Well,[2] mine is the disgrace; no harm will come to thee.

[1] Reading ὄκνῳ.

[2] Reading with Musgrave οὐκοῦν . . . ἀλλ' οὐ. Jerram reads οὔκουν . . . ἀλλά σοί giving as the sense of this line and the next—

DEM. 'Tis harm to me, if I let them be haled away by thee.

COP. Banish them thyself, and then will I take them from elsewhere.

DEM. Nature made thee a fool, to think thou knowest better than the god.

COP. It seems then evildoers are to find a refuge here.

DEM. A temple of the gods is an asylum open to the world.

COP. Maybe they will not take this view in Mycenæ.

DEM. What! am I not lord of this domain?

COP. So long as thou injure not the Argives, and if[1] wise, thou wilt not.

DEM. Be injured for all I care, provided I sin not against the gods.

COP. I would not have thee come to blows with Argos.

DEM. I am of like mind in this; but I will not dismiss these from my protection.

COP. For all that, I shall take and drag my own away.

DEM. Why then perhaps thou wilt find a difficulty in returning to Argos.

COP. That shall I soon find out by making the attempt.

DEM. Touch them and thou shalt rue it, and that without delay.

CHO. I conjure thee, never dare to strike a herald.

DEM. Strike I will, unless that herald learn discretion.

CHO. Depart; and thou, O king, touch him not.

COP. I go; for 'tis feeble fighting with a single arm. But I will come again, bringing hither a host of Argive troops, spearmen clad in bronze; for countless warriors are awaiting my return, and king Eurystheus in person at their head;

"*Cop.* No disgrace to me: the hurt will be thine.
Dem. So it will, if I let thee take them."

[1] Kirchhoff places a comma after ἐκείνους, and changes ἦν into ἄν, but this is not necessary.

anxiously he waits the issue here on the borders of Alcathous'[1] realm. And when he hears thy haughty answer, he will burst upon thee, and thy citizens, on this land and all that grows therein; for all in vain should we possess such hosts of picked young troops in Argos, should we forbear to punish thee. [*Exit* COPREUS.

DEM. Perdition seize thee! I am not afraid of thy Argos. Be very sure thou shalt not drag these suppliants hence by force, to my shame; for I hold not this city subject unto Argos, but independently.

CHO. 'Tis time to use our forethought, ere the host of Argos approach our frontier, for exceeding fierce are the warriors of Mycenæ, and in the present case still more than heretofore. For all heralds observe this custom, to exaggerate what happened twofold. Bethink thee what a tale he will tell his master of his dreadful treatment, how he came very near losing his life altogether.

IOL. Children have no fairer prize than this, the being born of a good and noble sire, and the power to wed from noble families; but whoso is enslaved by passion and makes a lowborn match, I cannot praise for leaving to his children a legacy of shame, to gratify himself. For noble birth offers a stouter resistance to adversity than base parentage; we, for instance, in the last extremity of woe, have found friends and kinsmen here, the only champions of these children through all the length and breadth of this Hellenic world. Give, children, give to them your hand, and they the same to you; draw near to them. Ah! children, we have made trial of our friends, and if ever ye see the path that leads you back to your native land, and possess your home and the honours of your father, count them ever as your friends and saviours, and never lift against their land the foeman's spear, in memory of this, but hold this city first midst those ye love. Yea, they well deserve your warm regard, in that

[1] He was king of Megara.

they have shifted from our shoulders to their own the enmity of so mighty a land as Argos and its people, though they saw we were vagabonds and beggars; still they did not give us up nor drive us forth. So while I live, and after death,—come when it will,—loudly will I sing thy praise, good friend, and will extol thee as I stand at Theseus' side, and cheer his heart, as I tell how thou didst give kind welcome and protection to the sons of Heracles, and how nobly thou dost preserve thy father's fame through the length of Hellas, and hast not fallen from the high estate, to which thy father brought thee, a lot which few others can boast; for 'mongst the many wilt thou find one maybe, that is not degenerate from his sire.

Cho. This land is ever ready in an honest cause to aid the helpless. Wherefore ere now it hath endured troubles numberless for friends, and now in this I see a struggle nigh at hand.

Dem. Thou hast spoken well, and I feel confident their conduct will be such; our kindness will they not forget. Now will I muster the citizens and set them in array, that I may receive Mycenæ's host with serried ranks. But first will I send scouts to meet them, lest they fall upon me unawares; for at Argos every man is prompt to answer to the call, and I will assemble prophets and ordain a sacrifice. But do thou leave the altar of Zeus and go with the children into the house; for there are those, who will care for thee, even though I be abroad. Enter then my house, old man.

Iol. I will not leave the altar. Let[1] us sit here still, praying for the city's fair success, and when thou hast made a glorious end of this struggle, will we go unto the house; nor are the gods who champion us weaker than the gods of Argos, O king; Hera, wife of Zeus, is their leader; Athena ours. And this I say is an omen of success, that we have the stronger deity, for Pallas will not brook defeat.

[*Exit* Demophon.

[1] Or, "let us keep our suppliant seat, awaiting the city's success."

Cho. Though loud thy boasts, there be others care no more for thee for that, O stranger[1] from the land of Argos; nor wilt thou scare my soul with swelling words. Not yet be this the fate of mighty Athens, beauteous town! But thou art void of sense, and so is he, who lords it o'er Argos, the son of Sthenelus,—thou that comest to another state, in no wise weaker than Argos, and, stranger that thou art, wouldst drag away by force suppliants of the gods, wanderers that cling[2] to my land for help, refusing to yield to our king, nor yet having any honest plea to urge. How can such conduct count as honourable, at least in wise men's judgment? I am for peace myself; yet I tell thee, wicked king, although thou come unto my city, thou shalt not get so easily what thou expectest. Thou art not the only man to wield a sword or targe with plates of brass. Nay, thou eager warrior, I warn thee, bring not war's alarms against our lovely town; restrain thyself.

Iol. My son, why, prithee, art thou returned with that anxious look? Hast thou news of the enemy? Are they coming, are they here, or what thy tidings? For of a surety yon herald will not play us false. No! sure I am their captain, prosperous heretofore, will come, with thoughts exceeding proud against Athens. But Zeus doth punish overweening pride.

Dem. The host of Argos is come, and Eurystheus its king; my own eyes saw him, for the man who thinks he knows good generalship must see the foe not by messengers alone. As yet, however, he hath not sent his host into the plain, but, camped upon a rocky brow, is watching—I only tell thee what I think this means—to see by which road to lead his army hither without fighting, and how to take up a safe position in this land. However, all my plans are by this time carefully laid; the city is under arms, the victims

[1] Reading ὦ ξεῖν' Ἀργόθεν ἐλθών (Erfurdt).

[2] Reading with Dindorf ἀντισχομένους. Nauck has ἀντομένους.

stand ready to be slain to every god, whose due this is; my seers have filled the town with sacrifices, to turn the foe to flight and keep our country safe. All those who chant prophetic words have I assembled, and have examined ancient oracles, both public and secret, as means to save this city. And though the several answers differ in many points, yet in one is the sentiment of all clearly the same; they bid me sacrifice to Demeter's[1] daughter some maiden from a noble father sprung. Now I, though in your cause I am as zealous as thou seest, yet will not slay my child, nor will I compel any of my subjects to do so against his will; for who of his own will doth harbour such an evil thought as to yield with his own hands the child he loves? And now thou mayest[2] see angry gatherings, where some declare, 'tis right to stand by suppliant strangers, while others charge me with folly; but if I do[3] this deed, a civil war is then and there on foot. Do thou then look to this and help to find a way to save yourselves and this country without causing me to be slandered by the citizens. For I am no despot like a barbarian monarch; but provided[4] I do what is just, just will my treatment be.

Cho. Can it be that heaven forbids this city to help strangers, when it hath the will and longing so to do?

Iol. My children, we are even as those mariners, who have escaped the storm's relentless rage, and have the land almost within their reach, but after all are driven back from shore by tempests to the deep again. Even so we, just as we reach the shore in seeming safety, are being thrust back from this land. Ah me! Why, cruel hope, didst thou then

[1] Persephone, queen of the dead.

[2] Hartung unnecessarily reads *ἀστῶν ἴδοις*.

[3] Reading *εἰ δὲ δὴ* which gives a quite intelligible sense; yet it has been altered by some into *ἢν δὲ μὴ*.

[4] Cobet proposed *ἤνπερ ἄδικα*, *i.e.* "if I do what is unjust, I shall get my deserts."

cheer my heart, though thou didst not mean to make the boon complete? The king may well be pardoned, if he will not slay his subjects' children: and with my treatment here I am content; if indeed 'tis heaven's will, I thus should fare, still is my gratitude to thee in no wise lost. Children, I know not what to do for you. Whither shall we turn? for what god's altar have we left uncrowned? to what fenced city have we failed to go? Ruin and surrender are our instant lot, poor children! If I must die, 'tis naught to me, save that thereby I give those foes of mine some cause for joy. But you, children, I lament and pity, and that aged mother of your sire, Alcmena. Ah, woe is thee for thy long span of life! and woe is me for all my idle toil! 'Twas after all our destined doom to fall into the hands of our hated foe, and die a death of shame and misery. But lend me thine aid, thou knowest how; for all hope of these children's safety has not yet left me. Give me up instead of them to the Argives, O king; run no risk, but let me save the children; to love my life becomes me not: let it pass. Me[1] will Eurystheus be most glad to take and treat despitefully, as I was Heracles' companion: for the man is but a boor; wherefore wise men ought to pray to get a wise man for their foe, and not a proud senseless fool: for so, even if by fortune[2] flouted, one would meet with much consideration.

Cho. Old man, blame[3] not this city; for though perhaps a gain[4] to us, yet would it be a foul reproach that we betrayed strangers.

Dem. A generous scheme is thine, but impossible. 'Tis not in quest of thee yon king comes marching hither; what

[1] Usener, followed by Nauck, regards lines 456 to 460 as spurious.

[2] Reading with Tyrrwhitt κἀτυχὴς for καὶ δίκης, which in the Aldine became καὶ τύχης and suggested the emendation.

[3] But Iolaus has praised, not blamed, Athens. And so Hartung proposes to read ἐπαινέσῃς. Usener τήνδε ταῦτ' αἰτεῖ.

[4] Reading κέρδος. Nauck has ψευδές.

would Eurystheus gain by the death of one so old? Nay, 'tis these children's blood he wants. For there is danger to a foe in the youthful scions of a noble race, whose memory dwells upon their father's wrongs; all this Eurystheus must foresee. But if thou hast any scheme besides, that better suits the time, be ready with it, for, since I heard that oracle, I am at a loss and full of fear. [*Exit* DEMOPHON.

MAC. Sirs, impute not boldness to me, because I venture forth; this shall be my first request, for a woman's fairest crown is this, to practise silence and discretion, and abide at home in peace. But when I heard thy lamentations, Iolaus, I came forth, albeit I was not appointed to take the lead in my family. Still in some sense am I fit to do so, for these my brothers are my chiefest care, and I fain would ask, as touching myself, whether some new trouble, added to the former woes, is gnawing at thy heart.

IOL. My daughter, 'tis nothing new that I should praise thee, as I justly may, above all the children of Heracles. Our house seemed to be prospering, when back it fell again into a hopeless state; for the king declares the prophets signify that he must order the sacrifice, not of bull or heifer, but of some tender maid of noble lineage, if we and this city are to exist. Herein is our perplexity; the king refuses either to sacrifice his own or any other's child. [1] Wherefore, though he use not terms express, yet doth he hint, that, unless we find some way out of this perplexity, we must seek some other land, for he this country fain would save.

MAC. Are these indeed the terms on which our safety depends?

IOL. Yea, on these; if, that is, we are successful otherwise.

MAC. No longer then cower before the hated Argive spear; for I, of my own free will, or ever they bid me, am ready to die and offer myself as a victim. For what excuse

[1] Nauck condemns lines 494 to 497.

have we, if, while this city deems it right to incur a great danger on our behalf, we, though we might save ourselves, fly from death, by foisting our trouble on others? No! indeed, 'twere surely most ridiculous to sit and mourn as suppliants of the gods, and show ourselves but cowards, children as we are of that illustrious sire. Where among the brave is such conduct seen? Better, I suppose, this city should be taken and I (which Heaven forefend!) fall into the hands of the enemy, and then, for all I am my noble father's child, meet an awful doom, and face the Death-god none the less. Shall I wander as an exile from this land? Shall I not feel shame then, when someone says, as say they will, "Why are ye come hither with suppliant boughs, loving your lives too well? Begone from our land! for we will not succour cowards." Nay, if these be slain and I alone be saved, I have no hope in any wise of being happy, though many ere now have in this hope betrayed their friends. For who will care to wed a lonely maid or make me mother of his children? 'Tis better I should die than meet such treatment, [[1] little as I merit it. This were fitter treatment for some other, one that is not born to fame as I am.] Conduct me to the scene of death, [[2] crown me with garlands, and begin the rites, if so it please you;] then be victorious o'er the foe, for here I offer my life freely and without constraint, and for my brothers and myself I undertake to die. [[3] For I, by loving not my life too well, have found a treasure very fair, a glorious means to leave it.]

Cho. Ah, what shall I say on hearing the maid's brave words, she that is ready to die for her brothers? Who can

[1] Paley brackets these two lines as spurious, and Nauck suspects their genuineness.

[2] Paley encloses this line in brackets. Nauck says it is either spurious or corrupt. Certainly it offends against tragic usage by containing a cretic foot as the fifth.

[3] Also regarded by Paley as spurious.

speak more noble words or do more noble deeds henceforth for ever?

Iol. Daughter, thou art his own true child, no other man's but Heracles', that godlike soul; proud am I of thy words, though I sorrow for thy lot. Yet will I propose a fairer method: 'tis right to summon hither all the sisters of this maiden, and then let her, on whom the lot shall fall, die for her family; for that thou shouldst die without the lot is not just.

Mac. My death shall no chance lot decide; there is no graciousness in that; peace! old friend. But if ye accept and will avail you of my readiness, freely do I offer my life for these, and without constraint.

Iol. Ah, this is even nobler than thy former word; that was matchless, but thou dost now surpass thy bravery and noble speech. I cannot bid, will not forbid thy dying, O my daughter! for[1] by thy death thou dost thy brothers serve.

Mac. A cautious bidding thine! Fear not to take a stain of guilt from me; only let me die as one whose death is free. Follow me, old friend, for in thy arms I fain would die; stand by and veil my body with my robe, for I will go even to the dreadful doom of sacrifice, seeing whose daughter I avow myself.

Iol. I cannot stand by and see thee bleed.

Mac. At least do thou beg me this boon of the king, that I may breathe out my life in women's arms instead of men's.

Dem. It shall be so, unhappy maid; for this were shame to me to refuse thee honour due, for many reasons: because thou hast a soul so brave; because 'tis right; and thou hast shown more courage than any of thy sex my eyes have ever seen. Now, if thou hast aught to say to these children or thy aged guide, oh[2]! say the last thou hast to say—then go.

[1] Nauck condemns this line.

[2] Reading *δή*, with Elmsley, for *μοι*.

Mac. Farewell, old friend, farewell! and prithee teach these children to be like thyself, wise at every point; let them strive no further, for that will suffice them. And seek to save them from death, even as thou art anxious to do; thy children are we, thy care it was that nurtured us. Thou seest how I yield my bridal bloom to die for them. For you, my brothers gathered here, may you be happy! and may every blessing be yours, for the which my blood shall pay the price![1] Honour this old friend, and her that is within the house, Alcmena, the aged mother of my sire, and these strangers too. And if ever heaven for you devise release from trouble and a return to your home, remember the burial due to her that saved you, a funeral fair[2] as I deserve; for I have not failed, but stood by you, and died to save my race. This shall be my pearl of price instead of children, and for the maiden life I leave, if there be really aught beyond the grave—God grant there may not be! For if, e'en there, we who are to die shall find a life of care, I know not whither one shall turn; for death is held a sovereign cure for every ill.

Iol. Maiden of heroic soul, transcending all thy race, be sure the fame that thou shalt win from us, in life, in death, shall leave the rest of women far behind; farewell to thee! I dare not say harsh words of her to whom thou art devoted, the goddess-daughter of Demeter. [*Exit* Macaria.] Children, I am undone, grief unnerves my limbs; take hold and support me to a seat hard by, when ye have drawn my mantle o'er my face, my sons. For I am grieved at what hath happened, and yet, were it not fulfilled, we could not live; thus were the mischief worse, though this is grief enough.

Cho. Without the will of heaven none is blest, none curst, I do maintain; nor doth the same house for ever tread

[1] Badham proposed *σφαλήσεται*, certainly an easier reading.
[2] Nauck, *μάλιστα* for *κάλλιστα*.

the path of bliss; for one kind of fortune follows hard upon another; one man it brings to naught from his high estate, another though of no[1] account it crowns with happiness. To shun what fate decrees, is no wise permitted; none by cunning shall thrust it from him; but he, who vainly would do so, shall have unceasing trouble. Then fall not prostrate thou, but bear what heaven sends, and set a limit to thy soul's grief; for she, poor maid! in dying for her brothers and this land, hath won a glorious death, and splendid fame shall be her meed from all mankind; for virtue's path leads through troublous ways. Worthy of her father, worthy of her noble birth is this conduct. And if thou dost honour the virtuous dead, I share with thee that sentiment.

SER. All hail, ye children! Where is aged Iolaus? where the mother of your sire, absent from their place at this altar?

IOL. Here am I, so far as I can be present at all.

SER. Why dost thou lie there? Why that downcast look?

IOL. There is come a sorrow on my house, whereby I am distressed.

SER. Arise, lift up thy head.

IOL. I am old, and all my strength is gone.

SER. But I come with tidings of great joy for thee.

IOL. Who art thou? Where have I met thee? I have no remembrance.

SER. I am a vassal of Hyllus; dost not recognize me now?

IOL. Best of friends, art thou come to save us twain from hurt?

SER. Assuredly; and moreover thou art lucky in the present case.

IOL. Alcmena, mother of a noble son, to thee I call! come forth, hear this welcome news. For long has anguish caused thee inwardly to waste, wondering if those, who now are here, would ever come.

[1] Reading *ἀτίταν*, Fix's emendation for the unmetrical *ἀλήταν* of MS.

ALC. What means that shout, that echoes throughout the house? Hath there come yet a herald from Argos, O Iolaus, and is he treating thee with violence? Feeble is any strength of mine; yet thus much let me tell thee, stranger, never, whilst I live, shalt thou drag them hence. Shouldst thou succeed, no more let me be thought the mother of that hero. And if thou lay a finger on them, thou wilt struggle to thy shame with two aged foes.

IOL. Courage, aged dame, fear not; not from Argos is a herald come, with hostile messages.

ALC. Why then didst raise a cry, fear's harbinger?

IOL. I called thee to come to me in front of this temple.

ALC. I know not what it means; who is this?

IOL. A messenger who says thy grandson cometh hither.

ALC. All hail to thee for these thy tidings! But why is he not here, where is he? if in this land he hath set foot. What hath happened to keep him from coming hither with thee, to cheer my heart?

SER. He is posting the army he brought with him, and seeing it marshalled.

ALC. Then have I no concern herein.

IOL. Yes, thou hast; though it is my business to inquire into these matters.

SER. What then wouldst thou learn of these events?

IOL. About how many allies has he with him?

SER. A numerous force; I cannot otherwise describe the number.

IOL. The leaders of the Athenians know this, I suppose?

SER. They do; already is their left wing set in array.

IOL. Is then the host already armed for battle?

SER. Yea, and already are the victims brought [1] near [2] the ranks.

IOL. About what distance is the Argive host from us?

[1] *κατῆρκται* has been proposed for *παρῆκται*.

[2] *πέλας* is Dindorf's emendation for *ἑκάς*.

SER. Near enough for their general to be plainly seen.

IOL. What is he about? marshalling the enemy's line?

SER. So we guessed; we could not hear exactly. But I must go, for I would not that my master should engage the foe without me, if I can help it.

IOL. I also will go with thee; for I like thee am minded, so it seems, to be there and help my friends.

SER. It least of all becomes thee thus to utter words of folly.

IOL. Far less to shrink from sharing with my friends the stubborn fight.

SER. Mere looks can wound no one, if the arm do naught.

IOL. Why, cannot I smite even through their shields?

SER. Smite perhaps, more likely be smitten thyself.

IOL. No foe will dare to meet me face to face.

SER. Friend, the strength, that erst was thine, is thine no more.

IOL. Well, at any rate, I will fight with as many as ever I did.

SER. Small the weight thou canst throw into the balance for thy friends.

IOL. Detain me not, when I have girded myself for action.

SER. The power to act is thine no more, the will maybe is there.

IOL. Stay here I will not, say what else[1] thou wilt.

SER. How shalt thou show thyself before the troops unarmed?

IOL. There be captured arms within this shrine; these will I use, and, if I live, restore; and, if I am slain, the god will not demand them of me back. Go thou within, and from its peg take down a suit of armour and forthwith bring it to me. To linger thus at home is infamous, while some go fight, and others out of cowardice remain behind.

[*Exit* Servant.

[1] Badham proposed *τἀμὰ* for *τἄλλα*.

CHO. Not yet hath time laid low thy spirit, 'tis young as ever; but thy body's strength is gone. Why toil to no purpose? 'Twill do thee hurt and benefit our city little. At thy age thou shouldst confess thy error and let impossibilities alone. Thou canst in no way get thy vigour back again.

ALC. What means this mad resolve to leave me with my children undefended here?

IOL. Men must fight; and thou must look to them.

ALC. And what if thou art slain? what safety shall I find?

IOL. Thy son's surviving children will care for thee.

ALC. Suppose *they* meet with some reverse? which Heaven forefend!

IOL. These strangers will not give thee up, fear not.

ALC. They are my last and only hope, I have no other.

IOL. Zeus too, I feel sure, cares for thy sufferings.

ALC. Ah! of Zeus will I never speak ill, but himself doth know, whether he is just to me.

SER. Lo! here thou seest a full coat of mail: make haste to case thyself therein: for the strife is nigh, and bitterly doth Ares loathe loiterers: but if thou fear the weight of the armour, go for the present without it, and in the ranks do on this gear; meantime will I carry it.

IOL. Well said! keep the harness ready to my hand, put a spear within my grasp, and support me on the left side, guiding my steps.

SER. Am I to lead this warrior like a child?

IOL. To save the omen, we must go without stumbling.

SER. Would thy power to act were equal to thy zeal!

IOL. Hasten; I shall feel it grievously, if I am too late for the battle.

SER. 'Tis thou who art slow, not I, though thou fanciest thou art doing wonders

IOL. Dost not mark how swift my steps are hasting?

SER. I mark more seeming than reality in thy haste.

IOL. Thou wilt tell a different tale when thou seest me there.

SER. What shall I see thee do? I wish thee all success, at any rate.

IOL. Thou shalt see me smite some foeman through the shield.

SER. Perhaps, if ever we get there. I have my fears of that.

IOL. Ah! would to Heaven that thou, mine arm, e'en as I remember thee in thy lusty youth, when with Heracles thou didst sack Sparta, couldst so champion me to-day! how I would put Eurystheus to flight! since he is too craven to wait the onslaught. For prosperity carries with it this error too a reputation for bravery; for we think the prosperous man a master of all knowledge.

CHO. O earth, and moon that shines by night, and dazzling radiance of the god, that giveth light to man, bear the tidings to me, shout aloud to heaven for joy, and beside our ruler's throne, and in the shrine of grey-eyed Athene. For my fatherland and home will I soon decide the issue of the strife with the gleaming sword, because I have taken suppliants under my protection. 'Tis a fearful thing, that a city prosperous as Mycenæ is, one famed for martial prowess, should harbour wrath against my land; still, my countrymen, it were a shameful thing in us to yield up suppliant strangers at the bidding of Argos. Zeus is on my side, I am not afraid; Zeus hath a favour unto me, as is my due; never by me[1] shall gods be thought weaker than mortal men. O dread goddess,[2] thine the soil whereon we stand, thine this city, for thou art its mother, queen, and saviour; wherefore turn some other way the impious king, who leadeth a host

[1] Dindorf's emendation is followed in this corrupt passage; *ἥσσονες παρ' ἐμοὶ θεοὶ φανοῦνται.*

[2] Pallas.

from Argos with brandished lance against this land; for, such my worth, I little merit exile from my home. For thy worship[1] is aye performed with many a sacrifice, and never art thou forgotten as each month draweth to its close, when young voices sing and dancers' music is heard abroad, while on our wind-swept hill goes up the cry of joy to the beat of maidens' feet by night.

SER. Mistress, the message that I bring is very short for thee to hear and fair for me, who stand before thee, to announce. O'er our foes we are victorious, and trophies are being set up, with panoplies upon them, taken from thy enemies.

ALC. Best of friends! this day hath wrought[2] thy liberty by reason of these tidings. But there still remains one anxious thought thou dost not free me from;—a thought of fear;—are those, whose lives I cherish, spared to me?

SER. They are, and high their fame through all the army spreads.

ALC. The old man Iolaus,—is he yet alive?

SER. Aye, that he is, a hero whom the gods delight to honour.

ALC. How so? Did he perform some deed of prowess?

SER. He hath passed from age to youth once more.

ALC. Thy tale is passing strange; but first I would that thou shouldst tell me, how our friends won the day.

SER. One speech of mine puts it all clearly before thee. When we had deployed our troops and marshalled them face to face with one another, Hyllus dismounted from his four-horsed chariot and stood midway betwixt the hosts. Then cried he, "Captain, who art come from Argos, why cannot we leave this land alone? No hurt wilt thou do Mycenæ, if of one man thou rob her; come! meet me in single combat, and, if thou slay me, take the children of Heracles away with

[1] The festival of the Panathenæa is alluded to.

[2] Reiske, *διήνυσεν* for the unusual *διήλασεν*.

thee, but, if thou fall, leave me to possess my ancestral honours and my home." The host cried yes! saying the scheme he offered was a fair one, both to rid them of their trouble and satisfy their valour. But that other, feeling no shame before those who heard the challenge or at his own cowardice, quailed, general though he was, to come within reach of the stubborn spear, showing himself an abject coward; yet with such a spirit he came to enslave the children of Heracles. Then did Hyllus withdraw to his own ranks again, and the prophets seeing that no reconciliation would be effected by single combat, began the sacrifice without delay and forthwith let flow from a human [1] throat auspicious streams of blood. And some were mounting chariots, while others couched beneath the shelter of their shields, and the king of the Athenians, as a highborn chieftain should, would exhort his host: "Fellow-citizens, the land, that feeds you and that gave you birth, demands to-day the help of every man." Likewise Eurystheus besought his allies that they should scorn to sully the fame of Argos and Mycenæ. Anon the Etrurian trumpet sounded loud and clear, and hand to hand they rushed; then think how loudly clashed their ringing shields, what din arose of cries and groans confused! At first the onset of the Argive spearmen broke our ranks; then they in turn gave ground; next, foot to foot and man to man, they fought their stubborn fray, many falling the while. And either chief cheered on his men, "Sons of Athens! Ye who till the fields of Argos! ward from your land disgrace." Do all we could, and spite of every effort, scarce could we turn the Argive line in flight. When lo! old Iolaus sees Hyllus starting from the ranks, whereon he lifts his hands to him with a prayer to take him up into his chariot. Thereon he seized the reins and went hard after the

[1] If *βροτείων* is correct, it would seem to refer to Macaria. Paley offers the ingenious suggestion *βοτείων*, *i.e.*, "throats of beasts" but the word has no authority. Better is Helbig's *βοείων*.

horses of Eurystheus. From this point onward must I speak from hearsay, though hitherto as one whose own eyes saw. For as he was crossing Pallene's hill, sacred to the goddess Athene, he caught sight of Eurystheus' chariot, and prayed to Hebe and to Zeus, that for one single day he might grow young again and wreak his vengeance on his foes. Now must thou hear a wondrous tale: two stars settled on the horses' yokes and threw the chariot into dark shadow, which—at least so say our wiser folk—were thy son and Hebe; and from that murky gloom appeared that aged man in the form of a youth with strong young arms; then by the rocks of Sciron the hero Iolaus o'ertakes Eurystheus' chariot. And he bound his hands with gyves, and is bringing that chieftain once so prosperous as a trophy hither, whose fortune now doth preach a lesson, clear as day, to all the sons of men, that none should envy him, who seems to thrive, until they see his death; for fortune's moods last but a day.

Cho. O Zeus, who puttest my foes to flight, now may I behold the day that frees me from cruel fear!

Alc. At last, O Zeus, hast thou turned a favouring eye on my affliction; yet do I thank thee for what has happened. And though ere this I did not believe my son was gathered to the gods, now am I convinced thereof. My children, now at last from toil shall ye be free, free from him, whom hideous death awaits, Eurystheus; now shall ye behold your father's city, and set foot in the land of your inheritance, and sacrifice to those ancestral gods, from whom ye have been debarred and forced to lead in strangers' lands a life of wretched vagrancy. But tell me, what sage purpose Iolaus nursed in his heart, that he spared the life of Eurystheus, for to my mind this is no wisdom, to catch a foe and wreak no vengeance on him.

Ser. 'Twas his regard for thee, that thou might'st see him subject to thy hand, and triumph[1] o'er him. Rest assured,

[1] Reading with Reiske κρατοῦσα.

'twas no willing prisoner he made, but by strong constraint he bound him, for Eurystheus was loth indeed to come alive into thy presence and pay his penalty. Farewell, my aged mistress; I pray thee remember thy first promise when I was beginning my story; set me free; for, at such a time as this, sincerity becometh noble lips. [*Exit* Servant.

Cho. Sweet is the dance to me, whenso the clear-toned flute and lovely Aphrodite shed grace upon the feast; and a joyful thing too it is, I trow, to witness the good luck of friends, who till then ne'er dreamt of it. For numerous is the offspring of Fate, that bringeth all to pass, and of Time, the son of Cronos. Thine is the path of justice, O my city; this must no man wrest from thee, thy reverence for the gods, and, whoso denieth it of thee, draws nigh to frenzy's goal, with these plain proofs in view. Yea, for the god proclaims it clearly, by cutting short the bad man's pride in every case. In heaven, mother, lives thy son, passed from earth away; that he went down to Hades' halls, his body burnt by the fire's fierce flame, is past belief; in golden halls reclined he has to wife Hebe, lovely nymph. Thou, O Hymen, hast honoured them, children both of Zeus. Things for the most part form a single chain; for instance, men say Athene used to champion their father, and now the citizens of that goddess have saved his children, and checked the insolence of him, whose heart preferred violence to justice. God save me from such arrogance, such greed of soul! [Eurystheus *is brought in bound.*

Mes. Mistress, though thine eyes see him, yet will I announce we have brought Eurystheus hither for thy pleasure, an unexpected sight, for him no less a chance he ne'er foresaw; for little he thought of ever falling into thy hands, what time he marched from Mycenæ with his toil-worn warriors, to sack Athens, thinking himself far above fortune. But a power divine hath reversed our destinies, changing their position. Now Hyllus and brave Iolaus I left raising

an image to Zeus, who routs the foe, for their triumphant victory, whilst they bid me bring this prisoner to thee, wishing to gladden thy heart; for 'tis the sweetest sight to see a foe fall on evil days after prosperity.

ALC. Art come, thou hateful wretch? Hath Justice caught thee then at last? First, turn thy head this way to me, and endure to look thy enemies in the face, for thou art no more the ruler, but the slave. Art[1] thou the man—for this I fain would learn—who didst presume to heap thy insults on my son, who now is where he is, thou miscreant? What outrage didst thou abstain from putting upon him? Thou that didst make him go down alive even to Hades, and wouldst send him with an order to slay hydras and lions? Thy other evil schemes I mention not, for to tell them were a tedious task for me. Nor did it content thee to venture thus far only; no! but from all Hellas wouldst thou drive me and my children, heaven's suppliants though we were, grey-heads some of us, and some still tender babes. But here hast thou found men and a free city, that feared not thee. Die in torment must thou, and e'en so wilt thou gain in every way, for one death is not thy due, after all the sorrow thou hast caused.

MES. Thou mayst not slay him.

ALC. Then have we taken him captive in vain. But say what law forbids his death?

MES. It is not the will of the rulers of this land.

ALC. Why, what is this? Do they not approve of slaying enemies?

MES. Not such as they have taken alive in battle.

ALC. Did Hyllus uphold this decision?

MES. He, I suppose, ought to have disobeyed the law of the land.

ALC. The prisoner's life ought not to have been spared a moment.

[1] Nauck condemns this line; as also line 948.

MES. It was then that he was wronged, by not being slain at first.

ALC. Why, then, he is still in time to pay his penalty.

MES. There is no one, who will slay him now.

ALC. I will; and yet I count myself someone.

MES. Well, thou wilt incur great blame, if thou do this deed.

ALC. I love this city well; that cannot be gainsaid. But since this man hath fallen into my power, no mortal hand shall wrest him from me. Wherefore let who will, call me the woman bold, with thoughts too high for her sex; yet shall this deed be brought to pass by me.

CHO. Lady, full well I understand thou hast a dire quarrel with this man, and 'tis pardonable.

EUR. Woman, be sure I will not flatter thee nor say aught to save my life, that can give any occasion for a charge of cowardice. It was not of my own free will I took this quarrel up; I am aware that I was born thy cousin, and kinsman to Heracles, thy son; but whether I would or no, Hera, by her power divine, caused me to be afflicted thus. Still, when I undertook to be his foe, and when I knew I had to enter on this struggle, I set myself to devise trouble in plenty, and oft from time to time my midnight communing bore fruit, scheming how to push aside and slay my foes, and for the future divorce myself from fear; for I knew that son of thine was no mere cipher, but a man indeed; yea, for, though he was my foe, I will speak well of him, because he was a man of worth. Now, after he was taken hence, was I not forced, by reason of these children's hatred, and because I was conscious of an hereditary feud, to leave no stone unturned by slaying, banishing, and plotting against them? So long as I did so, my safety was assured. Suppose thyself hadst had my lot, wouldst not thou have set to harassing the lion's angry whelps, instead of letting them dwell at Argos undisturbed? Thou wilt not persuade us otherwise.

Now therefore, since they did not slay me then, when I was prepared to die, by the laws of Hellas my death becomes a curse on him, who slays me now. The city wisely let me go, in that she regarded the gods more than her hatred of me. Thou hast had my answer to thy words; henceforth must I be called avenging spirit [1] and noble hero too.[2] 'Tis even thus with me; to die have I no wish, but, if I leave my life, I shall in no way be grieved.

Cho. Alcmena, fain I would advise thee somewhat; let this man go, for 'tis the city's will.

Alc. Suppose he die, and yet I obey the city?

Cho. That would be best of all; but how can this be?

Alc. I will teach thee easily. I will slay him and then give up his corpse to those of his friends, who come for it, for, as regards his body, I will not disobey [3] the state; but by his death shall he pay me the penalty.

Eur. Slay me, I do not ask thee for mercy; yet since this city let me go and shrunk from slaying me, I will reward it with an old oracle of Loxias, which in time will benefit them more than doth appear. Bury my body after death in its destined grave in front of the shrine of the virgin goddess [4] at Pallene. And I will be thy friend and guardian of thy city for ever, where I lie buried in a foreign soil, but a bitter foe to these children's descendants, whensoe'er [5] with gathered host they come against this land, traitors to your kindness now; such are the strangers ye have championed. Why then came I hither, if I knew all

[1] Or, "guilty of blood." Lat. homo piacularis.

[2] *i.e.* I will meet my doom like a hero, and haunt you after death.

[3] *ἀπιστήσω* is suspected by Nauck, and certainly it is difficult to extract any satisfactory meaning from it. Liddell and Scott, citing this passage, alone say "will not hesitate to commit it to the ground"—a doubtful usage.

[4] Pallas.

[5] Referring to invasions by the Peloponnesians, descendants of the Heracleidæ.

this, instead of regarding the god's oracle? Because I thought, that Hera was mightier far than any oracle, and would not betray me. Waste no drink-offering on my tomb, nor spill the victim's blood; for I will requite them for my treatment here with a journey they shall rue; and ye shall have double gain from me, for I will help you and harm them by my death.

ALC. Why, why delay to kill this man, after hearing this, since this is needed to secure the safety of your city and your children? Himself points out the safest road. Though the man is now our foe, yet after death is he our gain. Away with him, ye servants, and cast him[1] to the dogs when ye have slain him. Think not thou shalt live to cast me forth from my native land again.

CHO. I agree. Lead on, servants. Our[2] conduct shall bring no stain of guilt upon our rulers.

[1] A strange breach of her promise just before—perhaps here, as in other parts of this play, some confusion is due to the very probable theory of Hermann that our text is incomplete—*e.g.* no account of Macaria's death-scene is extant; this could hardly have been omitted by such a lover of pathos as Euripides.

[2] We have had nothing to do with it. The responsibility rests with Alcmena.

THE SUPPLIANTS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ÆTHRA.
CHORUS OF ARGIVE MOTHERS.
THESEUS.
ADRASTUS.
HERALD.
MESSENGER.
EVADNE.
IPHIS.
CHILDREN.
ATHENA.

SCENE.—The Temple of Demeter at Eleusis.

THE SUPPLIANTS.

ÆTH. O Demeter, guardian of this Eleusinian land, and ye servants of the goddess who attend her fane, grant happiness to me and my son Theseus, to the city of Athens and the country of Pittheus, wherein my father reared me, Æthra, in a happy home, and gave me in marriage to Ægeus, Pandion's son, according to the oracle of Loxias. This prayer I make, when I behold these aged dames, who, leaving their homes in Argos, now throw themselves with suppliant branches at my knees in their awful trouble; for around the gates of Cadmus have they lost their seven noble sons, whom on a day Adrastus, king of Argos, led thither, eager to secure for exiled Polynices, his son-in-law, a share in the heritage of Œdipus; so now their mothers would bury in the grave the dead, whom the spear hath slain, but the victors prevent them and will not allow them to take up the corpses, spurning Heaven's laws. Here lies Adrastus on the ground with streaming eye, sharing with them the burden of their prayer to me, and bemoaning the havoc of the sword and the sorry fate of the warriors whom he led from their homes. And he doth urge me use entreaty, to persuade my son to take up the dead and help to bury them, either by winning words or force of arms, laying on my son and on Athens this task alone. Now it chanced, that I had left my house and come to offer sacrifice on behalf of the earth's crop at this shrine, where first the fruitful corn showed its bristling shocks above the soil. And here at the holy altars of the twain goddesses, Demeter and her daughter, I wait, holding

these sprays of foliage, a bond that bindeth not, in compassion for these childless mothers, hoary with age, and from reverence for the sacred fillets. To call Theseus hither is my herald to the city gone, that he may rid the land of that which grieveth them, or loose these my suppliant bonds, with pious observance of the gods' will; for such as are discreet amongst women should in all cases invoke the aid of men.

Cho. At thy knees I fall, aged dame, and my old lips beseech thee; arise, rescue from the slain my children's bodies, whose limbs, by death relaxed, are left a prey to savage mountain beasts, beholding the bitter tears which spring to my eyes and my old wrinkled skin torn by my hands; for what can I do else? who never laid out my children dead within my halls, nor now behold their tombs heaped up with earth. Thou too, honoured lady, once a son didst bear, crowning thy lord's marriage with fond joy; then share, O share with me thy mother's feelings, in such measure as my sad heart grieves for my own dead sons; and persuade thy son, whose aid we implore, to go unto the river Ismenus, there to place within my hapless arms the bodies of my children, slain in their prime and left without a tomb.[1] Though[2] not as piety enjoins, yet from sheer necessity I have come to the fire-crowned altars of the gods, falling on my knees with instant supplication, for my cause is just, and 'tis in thy power, blest as thou art in thy children, to remove from me my woe; so in my sore distress I do beseech thee of my misery place in my hands my son's dead body, that I may throw my arms about his hapless limbs.

Semi. Behold a rivalry in sorrow! woe takes up the tale of woe; hark! thy servants beat their breasts. Come ye

[1] Translating from Elmsley's emendation of this corrupt passage, *θαλερῶν σῶμα ταλαίνας ἄταφον*.

[2] Because they had arrived during a festival, and their supplication at such a time was a bad omen.

who join the mourners' wail, come, O sympathetic band, to join the dance, which Hades honours; let the[1] pearly nail be stained red, as it rends your cheeks, let your skin be streaked with gore; for honours rendered to the dead are a credit[2] to the living. Sorrow's charm doth drive me wild, insatiate, painful, endless, even as the trickling stream that gushes from some steep rock's face; for 'tis woman's way to fall a-weeping o'er the cruel calamity of children dead. Ah me! would I could die and forget my anguish!

THE. What is this lamentation that I hear, this beating of the breast, these dirges for the dead, with cries that echo from this shrine? How fluttering fear disquiets me, lest haply my mother have gotten some mischance, in quest of whom I come, for she hath been long absent from home. Ha! what now? A strange sight challenges my speech; I see my aged mother sitting at the altar and stranger dames are with her, who in various note proclaim their woe; from aged eyes the piteous tear is starting to the ground, their hair is shorn, their robes are not the robes of joy. What means it, mother? 'Tis thine to make it plain to me, mine to listen; yea, for I expect some tidings strange.

ÆTH. My son, these are the mothers of those chieftains seven, who fell around the gates of Cadmus' town. With suppliant boughs they keep me prisoner, as thou seest, in their midst.

THE. And who is yonder man, that moaneth piteously in the gateway?

ÆTH. Adrastus, they inform me, king of Argos.

THE. Are those his children, those boys who stand round him?

ÆTH. Not his, but the sons of the fallen slain.

[1] Hartung proposes to read *διὰ παρῆδος ὄνυχα τίθετε φόνιον, αἱματοῖ τε χρόα τε λευκόν*, but I have followed Paley's text, which gives a possible meaning.

[2] Reading *κόσμος*, which Hartung alters to *κῆδος*.

THE. Why are they come to us, with suppliant hand outstretched?

AETH. I know; but 'tis for them to tell their story, my son.

THE. To thee, in thy mantle muffled, I address my inquiries; unveil thy head, let lamentation be, and speak; for naught can be achieved save through the utterance of thy tongue.[1]

ADR. Victorious prince of the Athenian realm, Theseus, to thee and to thy city I, a suppliant, come.

THE. What seekest thou? What need is thine?

ADR. Dost know how I did lead an expedition to its ruin?

THE. Assuredly; thou didst not pass through Hellas, all in silence.

ADR. There I lost the pick of Argos' sons.

THE. These are the results of that unhappy war.

ADR. I went and craved their bodies from Thebes.

THE. Didst thou rely on heralds, Hermes' servants, in order to bury them?

ADR. I did; and even then their slayers said me nay.

THE. Why, what say they to thy just request?

ADR. Say! Success makes them forget how to bear their fortune.

THE. Art come to me then for counsel? or wherefore?

ADR. With the wish that thou, O Theseus, shouldst recover the sons of the Argives.

THE. Where is your Argos now? were its vauntings all in vain?

ADR. Defeat and ruin are our lot. To thee for aid we come.

THE. Is this thy own private resolve, or the wish of all the city?

[1] Markland's emendation περᾷς . . . 'ών, is certainly tempting. Hartung adopts it; but Paley and Nauck, whom I have followed, retain the old reading πέρας . . . 'ών.

ADR. The sons of Danaus, one and all, implore thee to bury the dead.

THE. Why didst lead thy seven armies against Thebes?

ADR. To confer that favour on the husbands of my daughters twain.

THE. To which of the Argives didst thou give thy daughters in marriage?

ADR. I made no match for them with kinsmen of my family.

THE. What! didst give Argive maids to foreign lords?

ADR. Yea, to Tydeus, and to Polynices, who was Theban-born.

THE. What induced thee to select this alliance?

ADR. Dark riddles of Phœbus stole away my judgment.

THE. What said Apollo to determine the maidens' marriage?

ADR. That I should give my daughters twain to a wild boar and a lion.

THE. How dost thou explain the message of the god?

ADR. One night came to my door two exiles.

THE. The name of each declare; thou art speaking of both together.

ADR. They fought together, Tydeus with Polynices.

THE. Didst thou give thy daughters to them as to wild beasts?

ADR. Yea, for, as they fought, I likened them to those monsters twain.

THE. Why had they left the borders of their native land and come to thee?

ADR. Tydeus was exiled for the murder of a kinsman.

THE. Wherefore had the son of Œdipus left Thebes?

ADR. By reason of his father's curse, not to spill his brother's blood.

THE. Wise no doubt that voluntary exile.

ADR. But those who stayed at home were for injuring the absent.

THE. What! did brother rob brother of his inheritance?

ADR. To avenge this I set out; hence my ruin.

THE. Didst consult seers, and gaze into the flame of burnt-offerings?

ADR. Ah me! thou pressest on the very point, wherein I most did fail.

THE. It seems thy going was not favoured by heaven.

ADR. Worse; I went in spite even of Amphiaraus.

THE. And so heaven lightly turned[1] its face from thee.

ADR. I was carried away by the clamour of younger men.

THE. Thou didst favour courage instead of discretion.

ADR.[2] [True; and many a general owes defeat to that.] O king of Athens, bravest of the sons of Hellas, I blush to throw myself upon the ground and clasp thy knees, I a grey-haired king, blest in days gone by; yet needs must I yield to my misfortunes. I pray thee save the dead; have pity on my sorrows and on these, the mothers of the slain, whom hoary eld finds reft of their sons; yet they endured to journey hither and tread a foreign soil with aged tottering steps, bearing no embassy to Demeter's mysteries; only seeking burial for their dead, which lot should have been theirs, e'en burial by the hands of sons still in their prime. [3]And 'tis wise in the rich to see the poor man's poverty, and in the poor man to turn ambitious eyes toward the rich, that so he may himself indulge a longing for property; and they, whom fortune frowns not on, should gaze on misery's presentment; [likewise, who maketh songs should take a pleasure in their making; for if it be not so with him, he will in no wise avail to gladden others, if

[1] Reiske conjectures *ἀπεστράφης* and omits σ'.

[2] Dindorf condemns this line. Paley brackets it as spurious. Nauck assigns it to Theseus, and retains it.

[3] Nauck condemns from line 170—183. Reiske, followed by Paley, brackets lines 180—183. Dindorf considers that the rest of the speech is not free from suspicion.

himself have sorrow in his home; nay, 'tis not even right to expect it.] Mayhap thou'lt say, "Why pass the land of Pelops o'er, and lay this toil on Athens?" This am I bound to declare. Sparta is cruel, her customs variable; the other states are small and weak. Thy city alone would be able to undertake this labour; for it turns an eye on suffering, and hath in thee a young and gallant king, for want whereof to lead their hosts states ere now have often perished.

CHO. I too, Theseus, urge the same plea to thee; have pity on my hard fate.

THE. Full oft have I argued out this subject with others. For there are who say, there is more bad than good in human nature, to the which I hold a contrary view, that[1] good o'er bad predominates in man, for if it were not so, we should not exist. He hath my praise, whoe'er of gods brought us to live by rule from chaos and from brutishness, first by implanting reason, and next by giving us a tongue to declare our thoughts, so as to[2] know the meaning of what is said, bestowing fruitful crops, and drops of rain from heaven to make them grow, wherewith to nourish earth's fruits and to water her lap; and more than this, protection from the wintry storm, and means to ward from us the sun-god's scorching heat; the art of sailing o'er the sea, so that we might exchange with one another whatso our countries lack. And where sight fails us and our knowledge is not sure, the seer foretells by gazing on the flame, by reading signs in folds of entrails, or by divination from the flight of birds. Are we not then too proud, when heaven hath made such preparation for our life, not to be content therewith? But our presumption seeks to lord it over heaven, and in the pride of our hearts we think we are wiser than the gods.

[1] The following two lines are bracketed as spurious by Nauck.

[2] Reading ὥστε γιγνώσκειν. Jacobs, followed by Nauck and Hartung, emends into ὡς γεγωνίσκειν.

Methinks thou art even of this number, a son of folly, seeing that thou, though obedient to Apollo's oracle in giving thy daughters to strangers, as if gods really existed, yet hast hurt thy house by mingling the stream of its pure line with muddy waters; no! never should the wise man have joined the stock of just and unjust in one, but should have gotten prosperous friends for his family. For the deity, confusing their destinies, doth oft destroy by the sinner's fate him who never sinned nor committed injustice. Thou didst lead all Argos forth to battle, though seers proclaimed the will of heaven, and then in scorn of them and in violent disregard of the gods hast ruined thy city, led away by younger men, such as court distinction, and add war to war unrighteously, destroying their fellow-citizens; one aspires to lead an army; another fain would seize the reins of power and work his wanton will; a third is bent on gain, careless of any mischief the people thereby suffer. For there are three ranks of citizens; the rich, a useless set, that ever crave for more; the poor and destitute, fearful folk, that cherish envy more than is right, and shoot out grievous stings against the men who have aught, beguiled as they are by the eloquence of vicious leaders; while the class that is midmost of the three preserveth cities, observing such order as the state ordains. Shall I then become thy ally? What fair pretext should I urge before my countrymen? Depart in peace! For why[1] shouldst thou, having been ill-advised thyself, seek to drag our fortune down?

Cho. He erred; but with the young men rests this error, while he may well be pardoned.

Adr. I did not choose thee, king, to judge my affliction, but[3] came to thee to cure it; no! nor if in aught my

[1] Reading with Hermann *ἡμῶν τί δεῖ*; for MS. *'ημᾶς λίαν*.

[2] Paley's text here follows Matthiæ's emendation *ἴθ' εἰ γὰρ μὴ* for MS. *ἴθι δὴ· μὴ γάρ*.

[3] Dobree rejects this line. Nauck, Matthiae, and Hartung omit it also.

fortunes prove me wrong, came I to thee to punish or correct them, but to seek thy help. But if thou wilt not, I must be content with thy decision; for how can I help it? Come, aged dames, away! Yet leave behind you here the woven leaves of pale green foliage, calling to witness heaven and earth, Demeter, that fire-bearing goddess, and the sun-god's light, that our prayers to heaven availed us naught.

CHO. . . . .[1] who was Pelops' son, and we are of the land of Pelops and share with thee the blood of ancestors. What art thou doing? wilt thou betray these suppliant symbols, and banish from thy land these aged women without the boon they should obtain? Do not so; e'en the wild beast finds a refuge in the rock, the slave in the altars of the gods, and a state when tempest-tossed cowers to its neighbour's shelter; for naught in this life of man is blest unto its end.

Rise, hapless one, from the sacred floor of Persephone; rise, clasp him by the knees and implore him, "O recover the bodies of our dead sons, the children that I lost—ah, woe is me!—beneath the walls of Cadmus' town." Ah me! ah me![2] Take me by the hand, poor aged sufferer that I am, support and guide and raise me up. By thy beard, kind friend, glory of Hellas, I do beseech thee, as I clasp thy knees and hands in my misery; O pity me as I entreat for my sons with my tale of wretched woe, like[3] some beggar; nor let my sons lie there unburied in the land of Cadmus, glad prey for beasts, whilst thou art in thy prime, I implore thee. See the teardrop tremble in my eye, as thus I throw me at thy knees to win my children burial.

THE. Mother mine, why weepest thou, drawing o'er thine eyes thy veil? Is it because thou didst hear their piteous

[1] Something is lost here, referring to the claims of relationship. The sense perhaps is, "thou art thyself related to Pittheus, who was," etc.

[2] The words *ἰὼ μοι* to *γεραιᾶς* are probably interpolated. Nauck and Hartung reject them here.

[3] Reading *ἢ τιν' ἀλάταν* with Musgrave.

lamentations? To my own heart it goes. Raise thy silvered head, weep not where thou sittest at the holy altar of Demeter.

ÆTH. Ah woe!

THE. 'Tis not for thee their sorrows to lament.

ÆTH. Ye hapless dames!

THE. Thou art not of their company.

ÆTH. May I a scheme declare, my son, that shall add to thy glory and the state's?

THE. Yea, for oft even from women's lips issue wise counsels.

ÆTH. Yet the word, that lurks within my heart, makes me hesitate.

THE. Shame! to hide from friends good counsel.

ÆTH. Nay then, I will not hold my peace to blame myself hereafter for having now kept silence to my shame, nor will I forego my honourable proposal, from the common fear that it is useless for women to give good advice. First, my son, I exhort thee give good heed to heaven's will, lest from slighting it thou suffer shipwreck; [[1] for in this one single point thou failest, though well-advised in all else.] Further, I would have patiently endured, had it not been my duty to venture somewhat for injured folk; and this, my son, it is that brings thee now thy honour, and causes me no fear to urge that thou shouldst use[2] thy power to make men of violence, who prevent the dead from receiving their meed of burial and funeral rites, perform this bounden duty, and check those who would confound the customs of all Hellas; for this it is that holds men's states together,—strict observance of the laws. And some, no doubt, will say, 'twas cowardice made thee stand aloof in terror, when thou mightest have won for thy city a crown of glory, and, though thou didst encounter a savage swine,[3] labouring for a sorry

[1] Probably spurious. [2] Line 310 is rejected by Nauck.

[3] The monster Phæa, which infested the neighbourhood of Corinth.

task, yet when the time came for thee to face the helmet and pointed spear, and do thy best, thou wert found to be a coward. Nay! do not so if thou be son of mine. Dost see how fiercely thy country looks on its revilers when they mock her for want of counsel? Yea, for in her toils she groweth greater. But states, whose policy is dark and cautious, have their sight darkened by their carefulness. My son, wilt thou not go succour the dead and these poor women in their need? I have no fears for thee, starting as thou dost with right upon thy side; and although I see the prosperity of Cadmus' folk, still am I confident they will throw a different die; for the deity reverses all things again.

Cho. Ah! best of friends, right well hast thou pleaded for me and for Adrastus, and hence my joy is doubled.

The. Mother, the words that I have spoken are his fair deserts, and I have declared my opinion of the counsels that ruined him; yet do I perceive the truth of thy warning to me, that it ill suits my character to shun dangers. For by a long and glorious career have I displayed this my habit among Hellenes, of ever punishing the wicked. Wherefore I cannot refuse toil. For what will spiteful tongues say of me, when thou, my mother, who more than all others fearest for my safety, bidst me undertake this enterprise? Yea, I will go about this business and rescue the dead by words persuasive; or, failing that, the spear forthwith shall decide this issue, nor will heaven grudge me this. But I require the whole city's sanction also, which my mere wish will ensure; still by communicating the proposal to them I shall find the people better disposed. For them I made supreme, when I set this city free, by giving all an equal vote. So I will take Adrastus as a text for what I have to say and go to their assembly, and when I have won them to these views, I will return hither, after collecting a picked band of young Athenians; and then remaining under arms I will send a

message to Creon, begging the bodies of the dead. But do ye, aged ladies, remove from my mother your holy wreaths, that I may take her by the hand and conduct her to the house of Ægeus; for a wretched son is he who rewards not his parents by service; for, when he hath conferred on them the best he hath, he in his turn from his own sons receives all such service as he gave to them.

Cho. O Argos, home of steeds, my native land! ye have heard with your ears these words, the king's pious will toward the gods in the sight of great Pelasgia and throughout Argos. May he reach the goal! yea, and triumph o'er my sorrows, rescuing the gory corpse, the mother's idol, and making the land of Inachus his friend by helping her. For pious toil is a fair ornament to cities, and carries with it a grace that never wastes away. What will the city decide, I wonder? Will it conclude a friendly truce with me, and shall we obtain burial for our sons? Help, O help, city of Pallas, the mother's cause, that so they may not pollute the laws of all mankind. Thou, I know, dost reverence right, and to injustice dealest out defeat, a protection at all times to the afflicted.

The. (*to a herald.*) Forasmuch as with this thy art thou hast ever served the state and me by carrying my proclamations far and wide, so now cross Asopus and the waters of Ismenus, and declare this message to the haughty king of the Cadmeans: "Theseus, thy neighbour, one who well may win the boon he craves, begs as a favour thy permission to bury the dead, winning to thyself thereby the love of all the Erechthidæ." And if they will acquiesce, come back again, but if they hearken not, thy second message runneth thus, they may expect my warrior host; for at the sacred fount of Callichorus my army camps in readiness and is being reviewed. Moreover, the city gladly of its own accord undertook this enterprise, when it perceived my wish. Ha! who comes hither to interrupt my speech? A Theban herald,

so it seems, though I am not sure thereof. Stay; haply he may save thee thy trouble. For by his coming he meets my purpose half-way.

HER. Who is the despot of this land? To whom must I announce the message of Creon, who rules o'er the land of Cadmus, since Eteocles was slain by the hand of his brother Polynices, at the sevenfold gates of Thebes?

THE. Sir stranger, thou hast made a false beginning to thy speech, in seeking here a despot. For this city is not ruled by one man, but is free. The people rule in succession year by year, allowing no preference to wealth, but the poor man shares equally with the rich.

HER. Thou givest me here an advantage, as it might be in a game of draughts [1]; for the city, whence I come, is ruled by one man only, not by the mob; none there puffs up the citizens with specious words, and for his own advantage twists them this way or that,—one moment dear to them and lavish of his favours, the next a bane to all; and yet by fresh calumnies of others he hides his former failures and escapes punishment. Besides, how shall the people, if it cannot form true judgments, be able rightly to direct the state? Nay, 'tis time, not haste, that affords a better understanding. A poor hind, granted he be not all unschooled, would still be unable from his toil to give his mind to politics. Verily [2] the better sort count it no healthy sign when the worthless man obtains a reputation by beguiling with words the populace, though aforetime he was naught.

THE. This herald is a clever fellow, a dabbler in the art of talk. But since thou hast thus entered the lists with me, listen awhile, for 'twas thou didst challenge a discussion. Naught is more hostile to a city than a despot; where he is, there are in the first place no laws common to all, but one

[1] Possibly referring to a habit of allowing the weaker player so many moves or points.

[2] Kirchhoff considers lines 423 to 425 spurious.

man is tyrant, in whose keeping and in his alone the law resides, and in that case equality is at an end. But when the laws are written down, rich and poor alike have equal justice, and[1] it is open to the weaker to use the same language to the prosperous when he is reviled by him, and the weaker prevails over the stronger if he have justice on his side. Freedom's mark is also seen in this: "Who[2] hath wholesome counsel to declare unto the state?" And he who chooses to do so gains renown, while he, who hath no wish, remains silent. What greater equality can there be in a city? Again, where the people are absolute rulers of the land, they rejoice in having a reserve of youthful citizens, while a king counts[3] this a hostile element, and strives to slay the leading men, all such as he deems discreet, for he feareth for his power. How then can a city remain stable, where one cuts short all[4] enterprise and mows down the young like meadow-flowers in spring-time? What boots it to acquire wealth and livelihood for children, merely[5] to add to the tyrant's substance by one's toil? Why train up virgin daughters virtuously in our homes to gratify a tyrant's whim, whenso he will, and cause tears to those who rear them? May my life end if ever my children are to be wedded by violence! This bolt I launch in answer to thy words. Now say, why art thou come? what needest thou of this land? Had not thy city sent thee, to thy cost hadst thou come with thy outrageous utterances; for it is the herald's duty to tell the message he is bidden and hie him back in haste. Hence-

[1] Nauck omits lines 435, 436, as they are not given by Stobæus in quoting the passage.

[2] A reference to the question put by the herald in the Athenian *ἐκκλησία*, *Τίς ἀγορεύειν βούλεται*; It here serves as a marked characteristic of democracy.

[3] The words *ἐχθρὸν . . . ἀρίστους* are regarded by Nauck as spurious.

[4] *i.e.* *τόλμας*, for which Prinz suggests *κλῶνας*.

[5] Kirchhoff rejects this line.

forth let Creon send to my city some other messenger less talkative than thee.

CHO. Look you! how insolent the villains are, when Fortune is kind to them, just as if it would be well with them for ever.

HER. Now will I speak. On these disputed points hold thou this view, but I the contrary. So I and all the people of Cadmus forbid thee to admit Adrastus to this land, but if he is here, drive him forth in disregard of the holy suppliant[1] bough he bears, ere sinks yon blazing sun, and attempt not violently to take up the dead, seeing thou hast naught to do with the city of Argos. And if thou wilt hearken to me, thou shalt bring thy barque of state into port unharmed by the billows; but if not, fierce shall the surge of battle be, that we and our allies shall raise. Take good thought, nor, angered at my words, because forsooth thou rulest thy city with freedom, return a vaunting answer from[2] thy feebler means. Hope is man's curse; many a state hath it involved in strife, by leading them into excessive rage. For whenso the city has to vote on the question of war, no man ever takes his own death into account, but shifts this misfortune on to his neighbour; but if death had been before their eyes when they were giving their votes, Hellas would ne'er have rushed to her doom in mad desire for battle. And yet each man amongst us knows which of the two to prefer, the good or ill, and how much better peace is for mankind than war,—peace, the Muses' chiefest friend, the foe of sorrow, whose joy is in glad throngs of children, and its delight in prosperity. These are the blessings we cast away and wickedly embark on war, man enslaving his weaker brother, and cities following suit. Now thou art helping our foes even after death, trying to rescue and bury those whom their

[1] Reading *ἱκτήρια* with Nauck.

[2] Hartung's emendation of this doubtful expression is *'ἐν βραχεῖ λόγῳ*.

own acts of insolence have ruined. Verily then it would seem Capaneus was unjustly blasted by the thunderbolt and charred upon the ladder he had raised against our gates, swearing he would sack our town, whether the god would or no; nor should the yawning earth have snatched away the seer,[1] opening wide her mouth to take his chariot and its horses in, nor should the other chieftains be stretched at our gates, their skeletons to atoms crushed 'neath boulders. Either boast thy wit transcendeth that of Zeus, or else allow that gods are right to slay the ungodly. The wise should love their children first, next their parents and country, whose fortunes it behoves them to increase rather than break down. Rashness in a leader, as in a pilot, causeth shipwreck; who knoweth when to be quiet is a wise man. Yea and this too is bravery, even forethought.

Cho. The punishment Zeus hath inflicted was surely enough; there was no need to heap this wanton insult on us.

Adr. Abandoned wretch!

The. Peace, Adrastus! say no more: set not thy words before mine, for 'tis not to thee this fellow is come with his message, but to me, and I must answer him. Thy first assertion will I answer first: I am not aware that Creon is my lord and master, or that his power outweigheth mine, that so he should compel Athens to act on this wise; nay! for then would the tide of time have to flow backward, if we are to be ordered about, as he thinks. 'Tis not I who choose this war, seeing that I did not even join these warriors to go unto the land of Cadmus; but still I claim to bury the fallen dead, not injuring any state nor yet introducing murderous strife, but preserving the law of all Hellas. What is not well in this? If ye suffered aught from the Argives—lo! they are dead; ye took a splendid vengeance on your foes and covered them with shame, and now your

[1] *i.e.* Amphiaraus, who disappeared in a chasm of the earth.

right is at an end. Let[1] the dead now be buried in the earth, and each element return[2] to the place from whence it came to the body, the breath to the air, the body to the ground; for in no wise did we get it for our own, but to live our life in, and after that its mother earth must take it back again. Dost think 'tis Argos thou art injuring in refusing burial to the dead? Nay! all Hellas shares herein, if a man rob the dead of their due and keep them from the tomb; for, if this law be enacted, it will strike dismay into the stoutest hearts. And art thou come to cast dire threats at me, while thy own folk are afraid of giving burial to the dead? What is your fear? Think you they will undermine your land in their graves, or that they will beget children in the womb of earth, from whom shall rise an avenger? A silly waste of words, in truth it was, to show your fear of paltry groundless terrors. Go, triflers, learn the lesson of human misery; our life is made up of struggles; some men there be that find their fortune soon, others have to wait, while some at once are blest. Fortune lives a dainty life; to her the wretched pays his court and homage to win her smile; her likewise doth the prosperous man extol, for fear the favouring gale may leave him. These lessons should we take to heart, to bear with moderation, free from wrath, our wrongs, and do naught to hurt a whole city. What then? Let us, who will the pious deed perform, bury the corpses of the slain. Else is the issue clear; I will go and bury them by force. For never shall it be proclaimed through Hellas that heaven's ancient law was set at naught, when it devolved on me and the city of Pandion.

CHO. Be of good cheer; for if thou preserve the light of justice, thou shalt escape many a charge that men might urge.

HER. Wilt thou that I sum up in brief all thou wouldst say?

[1] Nauck regards these lines 531 to 536 as an interpolation.

[2] Restoring ἀπελθεῖν from Stobæus (Hartung).

THE. Say what thou wilt; for thou art not silent as it is.

HER. Thou shalt never take the sons of Argos from our land.

THE. Hear, then, my answer too to that, if so thou wilt.

HER. I will hear thee; not that I wish it, but I must give thee thy turn.

THE. I will bury the dead, when from Asopus' land I have removed them.

HER. First must thou adventure somewhat in the front of war.

THE. Many an enterprise and of a different kind have I ere this endured.

HER. Wert thou then begotten of thy sire to cope with every foe?

THE. Ay, with all wanton villains; virtue I punish not.

HER. To meddle is aye thy wont and thy city's too.

THE. Hence her enterprise on many a field hath won her frequent success.

HER. Come then, that the warriors of the dragon-crop may catch thee in our city.

THE. What furious warrior-host could spring from dragon's seed?

HER. Thou shalt learn that to thy cost. As yet thou art young and rash.

THE. Thy boastful speech stirs not my heart at all to rage. Yet get thee gone from my land, taking with thee the idle words thou broughtest; for we are making no advance. [*Exit* HERALD.] 'Tis time for all to start, each stout footman, and whoso mounts the car; 'tis time the bit, dripping with foam, should urge the charger on toward the land of Cadmus. For I will march in person to the seven gates thereof with the sharp sword in my hand, and be myself my herald. But thee, Adrastus, I bid stay, nor blend with mine thy fortunes, for I will take my own good star to lead

my host, a chieftain famed in famous deeds of arms. One thing alone I need, the favour of all gods that reverence right, for the presence of these things insures victory. For their valour availeth men naught, unless they have the god's goodwill. [*Exit* THESEUS.

1ST HALF-CHO. Unhappy mothers of those hapless chiefs! How wildly in my heart pale fear stirs up alarm!

2ND HALF-CHO. What is this new cry thou utterest?

1ST HALF-CHO. I fear the issue of the strife, whereto the hosts of Pallas march.

2ND HALF-CHO. Dost speak of issues of the sword, or interchange of words?

1ST HALF-CHO. That last were gain indeed; but if the carnage of battle, fighting, and the noise of beaten breasts again be heard in the land, what, alas! will be said of me, who am the cause thereof?

2ND HALF-CHO. Yet may fate again bring low the brilliant victor; 'tis this brave thought that twines about my heart.

1ST HALF-CHO. Thou speak'st of the gods as if they were just.

2ND HALF-CHO. For who but they allot whate'er betides?

1ST HALF-CHO. I see many a contradiction in their dealings with men.

2ND HALF-CHO. The former fear hath warped thy judgment. Vengeance calls vengeance forth; slaughter calls for slaughter, but the gods give respite from affliction, holding in their own hands each thing's allotted end.

1ST HALF-CHO. Would I could reach yon plains with turrets crowned, leaving Callichorus, fountain of the goddess!

2ND HALF-CHO. O that some god would give me wings to fly to the city of rivers twain!

1ST HALF-CHO. So might'st thou see and know the fortunes of thy friends.

2ND HALF-CHO. What fate, what issue there awaits the valiant monarch of this land?

1ST HALF-CHO. Once more do we invoke the gods we called upon before; yea, in our fear this is our first and chiefest trust.

2ND HALF-CHO. O Zeus, father to the child the heifer-mother bore in days long past, that daughter of Inachus!

1ST HALF-CHO. O be gracious, I pray, and champion this city!

2ND HALF-CHO. 'Tis thy own darling, thy own settler in the city of Argos that I[1] am striving to rescue for the funeral pyre from outrageous insult.

MES. Ladies, I bring you tidings of great joy, myself escaped—for I was taken prisoner in the battle which cost those chieftains seven their lives near Dirce's fount—to bear the news of Theseus' victory. But I will save thee tedious questioning; I was the servant of Capaneus, whom Zeus with scorching bolt to ashes burnt.

CHO. Friend of friends, fair thy news of thy own return, nor less the news about Theseus; and if the host of Athens, too, is safe, welcome will all thy message be.

MES. 'Tis safe, and all hath happened as I would it had befallen Adrastus and his Argives, whom from Inachus he led, to march against the city of the Cadmeans.

CHO. How did the son of Ægeus and his fellow-warriors raise their trophy to Zeus? Tell us, for thou wert there and canst gladden us who were not.

MES. Bright shone the sun, one levelled line of light, upon the world, as by Electra's gate I stood to watch, from a turret with a far outlook. And lo! I saw the host in three divisions, deploying its mail-clad warriors on the high ground by the banks of Ismenus; this last I heard;[2] and with them was the king himself, famous son of Ægeus; his own men,

[1] Reading ἐκκομίζομαι, MS., but Musgrave's emendation, ἐκκόμιζέ μοι is very probably right.

[2] The words ὡς μὲν ἦν λόγος have been suspected, and ὡς ἰδεῖν, λόχους suggested.

natives of old Cecropia, were ranged upon the right; while on the left, hard by the fountain of Ares, were the dwellers by the sea, harnessed spearmen they; on either wing were posted cavalry, in equal numbers, and chariots were stationed in the shelter of Amphion's holy tomb. Meantime, the folk of Cadmus set themselves before the walls, placing in the rear the bodies for which they fought. Horse to horse, and car to car stood ranged. Then did the herald of Theseus cry aloud to all: "Be still, ye folk! hush, ye ranks of Cadmus, hearken! we are come to fetch the bodies of the slain, wishing to bury them in observance of the universal law of Hellas; no wish have we to lengthen out the slaughter." Not a word would Creon let his herald answer back, but there he stood in silence under arms. Then did the drivers of the four-horse cars begin the fray; on, past each other they drave their chariots, bringing the warriors at their sides up into line. Some fought with swords, some wheeled the horses back to the fray again for those they drove.[1] Now when Phorbas, who captained the cavalry of the Erechthidæ, saw the thronging chariots, he and they who had the charge of the Theban horse met hand to hand, and by turns were victors and vanquished. The many horrors happening there I saw, not merely heard about, for I was at the spot where the chariots and their riders met and fought, but which to tell of first I know not,—the clouds of dust that mounted to the sky, the warriors tangled in the reins and dragged[2] this way and that, the streams of crimson gore, when men fell dead, or when, from shattered chariot-seats, they tumbled headlong to the ground, and, mid the splinters of their cars, gave up the ghost. But Creon, when he marked our cavalry's success[3] on one wing, caught up a shield and rushed into the

[1] Reading with Hartung *αὖθις αὖ παραιβάταις*.

[2] Nauck is of opinion that something has fallen out after line 689. The Greek, as it stands, is certainly open to suspicion.

[3] Paley retains *νικῶντα*, but Valckenaer's *εἴκοντα* is a good suggestion, *i.e.* "their army yielding to our cavalry."

fray, ere that despondency should seize his men ; but not for that did Theseus recoil in fear; no! snatching up at once his glittering harness he hied him on. And the twain, clashing their shields together as they met in the midst of the assembled host, were dealing death and courting it, shouting loudly each to his fellow the battle-cry: "Slay, and with thy spear strike home against the sons of Erechtheus." Fierce foes to cope with were the warriors whom the dragon's teeth to manhood reared ; so fierce, they broke our left wing, albeit theirs was routed by our right and put to flight, so that the struggle was evenly balanced. Here again our chief deserved all praise, for this success was not the only advantage he gained ; no! next he sought that part of his army which was wavering ; and loud he called to them, that the earth rang again, "My sons, if ye cannot restrain the earth-born warriors' stubborn spear, the cause of Pallas is lost." His word inspired new courage in all the Danaid[1] host. Therewith himself did seize a fearsome mace, weapon of Epidaurian warfare, and swung it to and fro, and with that club, as with a sickle, he shore off necks and heads and helmets thereupon. Scarce even then they turned themselves to fly. For joy cried I, and danced and clapped my hands ; while to the gates they ran. Throughout the town echoed the shrieks of young and old, as they crowded the temples in terror. But Theseus, when he might have come inside the walls, held back his men, for he had not come, said he, to sack the town, but to ask for the bodies of the dead. Such the general men should choose, one who shows his bravery in danger, yet hates the pride of those that in their hour of fortune lose the bliss they might have enjoyed, through seeking to scale the ladder's topmost step.

Cho. Now do I believe in the gods after seeing this

[1] Paley, Δαναιδῶν. Nauck, Κεκροπιδῶν. As applied to Athenians, the latter title is preferable. Musgrave, Κραναιδῶν.

unexpected day, and I feel my woes are lighter now that these have paid their penalty.

ADR. O Zeus, why do men assert the wisdom of the wretched human race? On thee we all depend, and all we do is only what thou listest. We thought our Argos irresistible, ourselves a young and lusty host, and so when Eteocles was for making terms, in spite of his fair offer we would not accept them, and so we perished. Then in their turn those foolish folk of Cadmus, to fortune raised, like some beggar with his newly-gotten wealth, waxed wanton, and, waxing so, were ruined in their turn. Ye foolish sons of men! who strain your bow like men who shoot beyond their mark, and only by suffering many evils as ye deserve, though deaf to friends, yet yield to circumstances; ye cities likewise, though ye might by parley end your mischief, yet ye choose the sword instead of reason to settle all disputes. But wherefore these reflections? This I fain would learn, the way thou didst escape; and after that I will ask thee of the rest.

MES. During the uproar which prevailed in the city owing to the battle, I passed the gates, just as the host had entered them.

ADR. Are ye bringing the bodies, for the which the strife arose?

MES. Ay, each of the seven chiefs who led their famous hosts.

ADR. What sayest thou? the rest who fell—say, where are they?

MES. They have found burial in the dells of Cithæron.

ADR. On this or that side of the mount? And who did bury them?

MES. Theseus buried them 'neath the shadow of Eleutheræ's cliff.

ADR. Where didst thou leave the dead he hath not buried?

MES. Not far away; earnest haste makes every goal look close.

ADR. No doubt in sorrow slaves would gather them from the carnage.

MES. Slaves! not one of them was set to do this toil.

ADR. . . . .[1]

MES. Thou wouldst say so, hadst thou been there to see his loving tendance of the dead.

ADR. Did he himself wash the bloody wounds of the hapless youths?

MES. Ay, and strewed their biers and wrapped them in their shrouds.

ADR. An awful burden[2] this, involving some disgrace.

MES. Why, what disgrace to men are their fellows' sorrows?

ADR. Ah me! how much rather had I died with them!

MES. 'Tis vain to weep and move to tears these women.

ADR. Methinks 'tis they who give the lesson. Enough[3] of that! My hands I lift at meeting of the dead, and pour forth a tearful dirge to Hades, calling on my friends, whose loss I mourn in wretched solitude; for this one thing, when once 'tis spent, man cannot recover, the breath of life, though he knoweth ways to get his wealth again.

CHO. Joy is here and sorrow too,—for the state fair fame, and for our captains double meed of honour. Bitter for me it is to see the limbs of my dead sons, and yet a welcome sight withal, because I shall behold the unexpected day after sorrow's cup was full. Would that Father Time had kept me unwed from my youth up e'en till now when I

[1] Hermann detected the loss of a line here. Subsequent editors have followed his hint.

[2] Reading *οὖν* for *ἦν* (Elmsley).

[3] Elmsley reads *ἀλλ' εἶμ', ἐπάρω* for MS. *ἀλλ' ἔ'εν, αἴρω*. Some correction of the kind does seem necessary, for the dead bodies are not noticed as arriving till later.

am old! What need had I of children? Methinks I should not have suffered excessively, had I never borne the marriage-yoke; but now I have my sorrow full in view, the loss of children dear.

Lo! I see the bodies of the fallen youths. Woe is me! would I could join these children in their death and descend to Hades with them!

Adr. Mothers, raise the wail for the dead departed; cry in answer when ye hear my note of woe.

Cho. My sons, my sons! O bitter words for loving mothers to address to you! To thee, my lifeless child, I call.

Adr. Woe! woe!

Cho. Ah me, my sufferings!

Adr. Alas!

Cho. . . . .[1]

Adr. We have endured, alas!—

Cho. Sorrows most grievous.

Adr. O citizens of Argos! do ye not behold my fate?

Cho. They see thee, and me the hapless mother, reft of her children.

Adr. Bring near the blood-boltered corpses of those hapless chiefs, foully slain by foes unworthy, with whom lay the decision of the contest.

Cho. Let me embrace and hold my children to my bosom in my enfolding arms.

Adr. There, there! thou hast—

Cho. Sorrows heavy enough to bear.

Adr. Ah me!

Cho. Thy groans mingle with those of their parents.[2]

Adr. Hear me.

Cho. O'er both of us thou dost lament.

Adr. Would God the Theban ranks had laid me dead in the dust!

[1] A lacuna in the MS.

[2] Reading with Hartung *τοῖς τεκοῦσ' ὁμοῦ λέγεις.*

Cho. Oh that I had ne'er been wedded to a husband!

Adr. Ah! hapless mothers, behold this sea of troubles!

Cho. Our nails have ploughed our cheeks in furrows, and o'er our heads have we strewn ashes.

Adr. Ah me! ah me! Oh that earth's floor would swallow me, or the whirlwind snatch me away, or Zeus's flaming bolt descend upon my head!

Cho. Bitter the marriages thou didst witness, bitter the oracle of Phœbus! The curse of Œdipus, fraught with sorrow, after desolating[1] his house, is come on thee.

The.[2] I meant to question thee when thou wert venting thy lamentations to the host, but I will let it pass; yet, though I dropped the matter then and left it alone, I now do ask Adrastus, "Of what lineage sprang those youths, to shine so bright in chivalry? Tell it to our younger citizens of thy fuller wisdom, for thou art skilled to know. Myself beheld their daring deeds, too high for words to tell, whereby they thought to capture Thebes. One question will I spare thee, lest I provoke thy laughter; the foe that each of them encountered in the fray, the spear from which each received his death-wound. These be idle tales alike for those who hear or him who speaks, that any man amid the fray, when clouds of darts are hurtling before his eyes, should declare for certain who each champion is. I could not ask such questions, nor yet believe those who dare assert the like; for when a man is face to face with the foe, he scarce can see even that which 'tis his bounden duty to observe.

Adr. Hearken then. For in giving this task to me thou

[1] For the unintelligible ἔγημας of the MS. Hermann conjectured ἔρημα σ' which is here followed.

[2] There is some corruption in the three following lines. Nauck's εἶασα for the words ἐς τὰ σὰ γε makes it possible to extract a meaning, but further emendation is needed. Nauck would omit the word στρατῷ in l. 838 and the whole of l. 839, except the word γόους.

findest a willing eulogist of friends, whose praise I would declare in all truth and sincerity. Dost see yon corpse by Zeus's bolt transfixed? That is Capaneus; though he had ample wealth, yet was he the last to boast of his prosperity; nor would he ever vaunt himself above a poorer neighbour, but shunned the man whose sumptuous board had puffed him up too high and made him scorn mere competence, for he held that virtue lies not in greedy gluttony, but that moderate means suffice. True friend was he, alike to present or to absent friends the same; of such the number is not great. His was a guileless character, a courteous address, that left no promise unperformed either towards his own household or his fellow-citizens. The next I name is Eteocles; a master he of other kinds of excellence; young, nor richly dowered with store, yet high in honour in the Argive land. And though his friends oft offered gifts of gold, he would not have it in his house, to make his character its slave by taking wealth's yoke upon him. Not his city, but those that sinned against her did he hate, for a city is no wise to be blamed if it get an evil name by reason of an evil governor. Such another was Hippomedon, third of all this band; from his very boyhood he refrained from turning towards the allurements of the Muses, to lead a life of ease; his home was in the fields, and gladly would he school his nature to hardships with a view to manliness, aye hasting to the chase, rejoicing in his steeds or straining of his bow, because he would make himself of use unto his state. Next behold the huntress Atalanta's son, Parthenopæus, a youth of peerless beauty; from Arcady he came even to the streams of Inachus, and in Argos spent his boyhood. There, when he grew to man's estate, first, as is the duty of strangers settled in another land, he showed no pique or jealousy against the state, became no quibbler, chiefest source of annoyance citizen or stranger can give, but took his stand amid the host, and fought for Argos as he were her own son,

glad at heart whenso the city prospered, deeply grieved if e'er reverses came; many[1] a lover though he had midst men and maids, yet was he careful to avoid offence. Of Tydeus next the lofty praise I will express in brief; no brilliant spokesman he, but a clever craftsman in the art of war, with many a shrewd[2] device; inferior in judgment to his brother Meleager, yet through his warrior skill lending his name to equal praise, for he had found in arms a perfect science; his was an ambitious nature, a spirit rich in store of deeds, with words less fully dowered. From this account then wonder not, Theseus, that they dared to die before the towers; for noble nurture carries honour with it, and every man, when once he hath practised virtue, scorns the name of villain. Courage may be learnt, for even a babe doth learn to speak and hear things it cannot comprehend; and whatso'er a child[3] hath learnt, this it is his wont to treasure up till he is old. So train up your children in a virtuous way.

Cho. Alas! my son, to sorrow I bare thee and carried thee within my womb, enduring the pangs of travail; but now Hades takes the fruit of all my hapless toil, and I that had a son am left, ah me! with none to nurse my age.

The. As for the noble son of Œcleus, him, while yet he lived, the gods snatched hence to the bowels of the earth, and his chariot too, manifestly blessing him; while I myself may truthfully tell the praises of the son of Œdipus, that is, Polynices, for he was my guest-friend ere he left the town of Cadmus and crossed to Argos in voluntary exile. But dost thou know what I would have thee do in this matter?

Adr. I know naught save this,—to yield obedience to thy hests.

The. As for yon Capaneus, stricken by the bolt of Zeus—

[1] Dindorf regards this line as an interpolation.

[2] Valckenaer σοφὸς for MS. σοφά. Porson condemns the line.

[3] Reading παῖς with Valckenaer.

ADR. Wilt bury him apart as a consecrated corpse?

THE. Even so; but all the rest on one funeral pyre.

ADR. Where wilt thou set the tomb apart for him?

THE. Here near this temple have I builded him a sepulchre.

ADR. Thy thralls forthwith must undertake this toil.

THE. Myself will look to those others; let the biers advance.

ADR. Approach your sons, unhappy mothers.

THE. This thy proposal, Adrastus, is anything but good.

ADR. Must not the mothers touch their sons?

THE. It would kill them to see how they are altered.

ADR. 'Tis bitter, truly, to see the dead even[1] at the moment of death.

THE. Why then wilt thou add fresh grief to them?

ADR. Thou art right. Ye[2] needs must patiently abide, for the words of Theseus are good. But when we have committed them unto the flames, ye shall collect their bones. O wretched sons of men! Why do ye get you weapons and bring slaughter on one another? Cease therefrom, give o'er your toiling, and in mutual peace keep safe your cities. Short is the span of life, so 'twere best to run its course as lightly as we may, from trouble free.

CHO. No more a happy mother I, with children blest; no more I share, among Argive women, who have sons, their happy lot; nor any more will Artemis in the hour of travail kindly greet these childless mothers. Most dreary is my life, and like some wandering cloud I drift before the howling blast. The seven noblest sons in Argos once we had, we seven hapless mothers; but now my sons are dead, I have no child, and on me steals old age in piteous wise,

[1] The MS. reading, *χἄμα τῳ̃ τέλει νεκρῶν* has been conjecturally altered by Toup into *αἶμα κώτειλαὶ νεκρῶν* which bold emendation has been followed by several editors. Hartung has *χρῶμα κώτειλαί*.

[2] Nauck brackets from *μένειν—Θησεύς* as suspicious.

nor 'mongst the dead nor 'mongst the living do I count[1] myself, having as it were a lot apart from these. Tears alone are left me; in my house sad memories of my son are stored; mournful tresses shorn from his head, chaplets that he wore, libations for the dead departed, and songs, but not such as golden-haired Apollo welcometh; and when I wake to weep, my tears will ever drench the folds of my robe upon my bosom. Ah! there I see the sepulchre ready e'en now for Capaneus, his consecrated tomb, and the votive offerings Theseus gives unto the dead outside the shrine, and nigh yon lightning-smitten chief I see his noble bride, Evadne, daughter of King Iphis. Wherefore stands she on the towering rock, which o'ertops this temple, advancing along yon path?

Eva. What light, what radiancy did the sun-god's car dart forth, and the moon athwart the firmament, while round her in the gloom swift stars[2] careered, in the day that the city of Argos raised the stately chant of joy at my wedding, in honour of my marriage with mail-clad Capaneus? Now from my home in frantic haste with frenzied mind I rush to join thee, seeking to share with thee the fire's bright flame and the self-same tomb, to rid me of my weary life in Hades' halls, and of the pains of existence: yea, for 'tis the sweetest end to share the death of those we love, if only fate will sanction it.

Cho. Behold yon pyre, which thou art overlooking, nigh thereto, set apart for Zeus! There is thy husband's body, vanquished by the blazing bolt.

Eva. Life's goal I now behold from my station here, may fortune aid me in my headlong leap from this rock in honour's cause, down into the fire below, to mix my ashes

[1] Dindorf, followed by Nauck, reads *κρινομένα*.

[2] None of the proposed emendations of this corrupt passage are convincing. Hermann's *λάμπαι δ' ὠκύθοοί νιν αμφιππεύουσι* is here followed. Nauck has *λαμπαδ' ἵν' ὠκυθόαι νύμφαι ἱππεύουσι*.

in the ruddy blaze with my husband's, to lay me side by side with him, there in the couch of Persephone; for ne'er will I, to save my life, prove untrue to thee where thou liest in thy grave. Away with life and marriage too! Oh![1] may my children live to see the dawn of a fairer, happier wedding-day in Argos! May loyalty inspire the husband's heart, his nature fusing with his wife's!

Cho. Lo! the aged Iphis, thy father, draweth nigh to hear thy startling scheme, which yet he knows not and will grieve to learn.

Iph. Unhappy child! lo! I am come, a poor old man, with twofold sorrow in my house to mourn, that I may carry to his native land the corpse of my son Eteocles, slain by the Theban spear, and further in quest of my daughter who rushed headlong from the house, for she was the wife of Capaneus and longed with him to die. Ere this she was well guarded in my house, but, when I took the watch away in the present troubles, she escaped. But I feel sure that she is here; tell me if ye have seen her.

Eva. Why question them? Lo, here upon the rock, father, o'er the pyre of Capaneus, like some bird I hover lightly, in my wretchedness.

Iph. What wind hath blown thee hither, child? Whither away? Why didst thou pass the threshold of my house and seek this land?

Eva. It would but anger thee to hear what I intend, and so I fain would keep thee ignorant, my father.

Iph. What! hath not thy own father a right to know?

Eva. Thou wouldst not wisely judge my intention.

[1] The following verses are corrupt almost beyond hope of emendation, nor is it quite clear what the poet intended. By reading *φανεῖεν*, as Paley suggests, with *τέκνοισιν ἐμοῖς* and supplying the hiatus by *εἴη δ'*, it is possible to extract an intelligible sense, somewhat different, however, from that proposed by Hermann or Hartung, and only offered here for want of a better.

IPH. Why dost thou deck thyself in that apparel?

EVA. A purport strange this robe conveys, father.

IPH. Thou hast no look of mourning for thy lord.

EVA. No, the reason why I thus am decked is strange, maybe.

IPH. Dost thou in such garb appear before a funeral-pyre?

EVA. Yea, for hither it is I come to take the meed of victory.

IPH. "Victory!" what victory? This would I learn of thee.

EVA. A victory o'er all women on whom the sun looks down.

IPH. In Athena's handiwork or in prudent counsel?

EVA. In bravery; for I will lay me down and die with my lord.

IPH. What dost thou say? What is this silly riddle thou propoundest?

EVA. To yonder pyre where lies dead Capaneus, I will leap down.

IPH. My daughter, speak not thus before the multitude!

EVA. The very thing I wish, that every Argive should learn it.

IPH. Nay, I will ne'er consent to let thee do this deed.

EVA. (*as she is throwing herself*). 'Tis all one; thou shalt never catch me in thy grasp. Lo! I cast me down, no joy to thee, but to myself and to my husband blazing on the pyre with me.

CHO. O lady, what a fearful deed!

IPH. Ah me! I am undone, ye dames of Argos!

CHO. Alack, alack! a cruel blow is this to thee, but thou must yet witness, poor wretch, the full horror of this deed.

IPH. A more unhappy wretch than me ye could not find.

Cho. Woe for thee, unhappy man! Thou, old sir, hast been made partaker in the fortune of Œdipus, thou and my poor city too.

Iph. Ah, why are mortal men denied this boon, to live their youth twice o'er, and twice in turn to reach old age? If aught goes wrong within our homes, we set it right by judgment more maturely formed, but our life we may not so correct. Now if we had a second spell of youth and age, this double term of life would let us then correct each previous slip. I, for instance, seeing others blest with children, longed to have them too, and found my ruin in that wish. Whereas if I had had my present experience, and by a father's light [1] had learnt how cruel a thing it is to be bereft of children, never should I have fallen on such evil days as these,—I who did beget a brave young son, proud parent that I was, and after all am now bereft of him. Enough of this. What remains for such a hapless wretch as me? Shall I to my home, there to see its utter desolation and the blank within my life? or shall I to the halls of that dead Capaneus?—halls I smiled to see in days gone by, when yet my daughter was alive. But she is lost and gone, she that would ever draw down my cheek to her lips, and take my head between her hands; for naught is there more sweet unto an aged sire than a daughter's love; our sons are made of sterner stuff, but less winning are their caresses. Oh! take me to my house at once, in darkness hide me there, to waste and fret this aged frame with fasting! What shall it avail me to touch my daughter's bones? Old age, resistless foe, how do I loathe thy presence! Them too I hate, whoso desire to lengthen out the span of life, seeking to turn the tide of death aside by philtres,[2] drugs, and magic spells,—folk that death should take away to leave

[1] Following Paley's *τεκών* for the MSS. *τέκνων*.

[2] Reading *βρωτοῖσι καὶ βοτοῖσι καὶ μαγεύμασι*, as restored from Plutarch's quotation of the passage.

the young their place, when they no more can benefit the world.

Cho. Woe, woe! Behold your dead sons' bones are brought hither; take them, servants of your weak old mistress, for in me is no strength left by reason of my mourning for my sons; time's comrade long have I been, and many a tear for many a sorrow have I shed. For what sharper pang wilt thou ever find for mortals than the sight of children dead?

Chil. Poor mother mine, behold I bring my father's bones gathered from the fire, a burden grief has rendered heavy, though this tiny urn contains my all.

Cho. Ah me! ah me! Why bear thy tearful load to the fond mother of the dead, a handful of ashes in the stead of those who erst were men of mark in Mycenæ?

Chil. Woe worth the hour! woe worth the day! Reft of my hapless sire, a wretched orphan shall I inherit a desolate house, torn from my father's arms.

Cho. Woe is thee! Where is now the toil I spent upon my sons? what thank have I for nightly watch? Where the mother's nursing care? the sleepless vigils mine eyes have kept? the loving kiss upon my children's brow?

Chil. Thy sons are dead and gone. Poor mother! dead and gone; the boundless air now wraps them round.

Cho. Turned to ashes by the flame, they have winged their flight to Hades.

Chil. Father, thou hearest thy children's lamentation; say, shall I e'er, as warrior dight, avenge thy slaughter?

Cho. God grant it, O my child!

Chil. Some day, if god so will, shall the avenging of my father be my task; not yet this sorrow sleeps.

Cho. Alas! Fortune's sorrows are enough for me, I have troubles and to spare already.

Chil. Shall Asopus' laughing tide ever reflect my brazen arms as I lead on my Argive troops?

CHO. To avenge thy fallen sire.

CHIL. Methinks I see thee still before my eyes, my father—

CHO. Printing a loving kiss upon thy cheek.

CHIL. But thy words of exhortation are borne on the winds away.

CHO. Two mourners hath he left behind, thy mother and thee, bequeathing to thee an endless legacy of grief for thy father.

CHIL. The weight of grief I have to bear hath crushed me utterly.

CHO. Come, let me clasp the ashes of my son to my bosom.

CHIL. I weep to hear that piteous word; it stabs me to the heart.

CHO. My child, thou art undone; no more shall I behold thee, thy own fond mother's treasure.

THE. Adrastus, and ye dames from Argos sprung, ye see these children bearing in their hands the bodies of their valiant sires whom I redeemed; to thee I give these gifts, I and Athens. And ye must bear in mind the memory of this favour, marking well the treatment ye have had of me. And to these children I repeat the self-same words, that they may honour this city, to children's children ever handing on the kindness ye received from us. Be Zeus the witness, with the gods in heaven, of the treatment we vouchsafed you ere you left us.

ADR. Theseus, well we know all the kindness thou hast conferred upon the land of Argos in her need, and ours shall be a gratitude that never waxeth old, for your generous treatment makes us debtors for a like return.

THE. What yet remains, wherein I can serve you?

ADR. Fare thee well, for such is thy desert and such thy city's too.

THE. Even so. Mayst thou too have the self-same fortune!

Ath. Hearken, Theseus, to the words that I Athena utter, telling thee thy duty, which, if thou perform it, will serve thy city. Give not these bones to the children to carry to the land of Argos, letting them go so lightly; nay, take first an oath of them that they will requite thee and thy city for your efforts. This oath must Adrastus swear, for as their king it is his right to take the oath for the whole realm of Argos. And this shall be the form thereof: "We Argives swear we never will against this land lead on our mail-clad troops to war, and, if others come, we will repel them." But if they violate their oath and come against the city, pray that the land of Argos may be miserably destroyed. Now hearken while I tell thee where thou must slay the victims. Thou hast within thy halls a tripod with brazen feet, which Heracles, in days gone by, after he had o'erthrown the foundations of Ilium and was starting on another enterprise, enjoined thee to set up at the Pythian shrine. O'er it cut the throats of three sheep; then grave within the tripod's hollow belly the oath; this done, deliver it to the god who watches over Delphi to keep, a witness and memorial unto Hellas of the oath. And bury the sharp-edged knife, wherewith thou shalt have laid the victims open and shed their blood, deep in the bowels of the earth, hard by the pyres where the seven chieftains burn; for its appearance shall strike them with dismay, if e'er against thy town they come, and shall cause them to return with sorrow. When thou hast done all this, dismiss the dead from thy land. And to the god resign as sacred land the spot where their bodies were purified by fire, there by the meeting of the triple roads that lead unto the Isthmus. Thus much to thee, Theseus, I address; next to the sons of Argos I speak; when ye are grown to men's estate, the town beside Ismenus shall ye sack, avenging the slaughter of your dead sires; thou too, Ægialeus, shalt take thy father's place and in thy youth command the host, and with thee

Tydeus' son marching from Ætolia,—him whom his father named Diomedes. Soon as the beards your cheeks o'ershadow must ye lead an armed Danaid host against the battlements of Thebes with sevenfold gates. For to their sorrow shall ye come like lion's whelps in full-grown might to sack their city. No otherwise is it to be; and ye shall be a theme for minstrels' songs in days to come, known through Hellas as "the After-born"; so famous shall your expedition be, thanks to Heaven.

THE. Queen Athena, I will hearken to thy bidding; for thou it is dost set me up, so that I go not astray. And I will bind this monarch by an oath; do thou but guide my steps aright. For if thou art friendly to our state, we shall henceforth live secure.

CHO. Let us go, Adrastus, and take the oath to this monarch and his state; for the service they have already done us claims our warm regard.

THE TROJAN WOMEN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

POSEIDON.
ATHENA.
HECUBA.
CHORUS OF CAPTIVE TROJAN WOMEN.
TALTHYBIUS.
CASSANDRA.
ANDROMACHE.
MENELAUS.
HELEN.

SCENE.—Before Agamemnon's Tent in the Camp near Troy.

THE TROJAN WOMEN.

Pos. Lo! from the depths of salt Ægean floods I, Poseidon, come, where choirs of Nereids trip in the mazes of the graceful dance; for since the day that Phœbus and myself with measurement exact set towers of stone about this land of Troy and ringed it round, never from my heart hath passed away a kindly feeling for my Phrygian town, which now is smouldering and o'erthrown, a prey to Argive prowess. For, from his home beneath Parnassus, Phocian Epeus, aided by the craft of Pallas, framed a horse to bear within its womb an armed host, and sent it within the battlements, fraught with death; whence in days to come men shall tell of "The wooden horse," with its hidden load of warriors. Groves forsaken stand and temples of the gods run down with blood, and at the altar's very base, before the god who watched his home, lies Priam dead. While to Achæan ships great store of gold and Phrygian spoils are being conveyed, and they who came against this town, those sons of Hellas, only wait a favouring breeze to follow in their wake, that after ten long years they may with joy behold their wives and children. Vanquished by Hera, Argive goddess, and by Athena, who helped to ruin Phrygia, I am leaving Ilium, that famous town, and the altars that I love; for when drear desolation seizes on a town, the worship of the gods decays and tends to lose respect. Scamander's banks re-echo long and loud the screams of captive maids, as they by lot receive their masters. Arcadia taketh some, and some the folk of Thessaly; others are

assigned to Theseus' sons, the Athenian chiefs. And such of the Trojan dames as are not portioned out, are in these tents, set apart for the leaders of the host; and with them Spartan Helen, daughter of Tyndarus, justly counted among the captives. And wouldst thou see that queen of misery, Hecuba, thou canst; for there she lies before the gates, weeping many a bitter tear for many a tribulation; for at Achilles' tomb,—though she knows not this,—her daughter Polyxena has died most piteously; likewise is Priam dead, and her children too; Cassandra, whom the king Apollo left to be a virgin, frenzied maid, hath Agamemnon, in contempt of the god's ordinance and of piety, forced to a dishonoured wedlock. Farewell, O city prosperous once! farewell, ye ramparts of hewn stone! had not Pallas, daughter of Zeus, decreed thy ruin, thou wert standing firmly still.

Ath. May I address the mighty god whom Heaven reveres and who to my own sire is very nigh in blood, laying aside our former enmity?

Pos. Thou mayst; for o'er the soul the ties of kin exert no feeble spell, great queen Athena.

Ath. For thy forgiving mood my thanks! Somewhat have I to impart affecting both thyself and me, O king.

Pos. Bringst thou fresh tidings from some god, from Zeus, or from some lesser power?

Ath. From none of these; but on behalf of Troy, whose soil we tread, am I come to seek thy mighty aid, to make it one with mine.

Pos. What! hast thou laid thy former hate aside to take compassion on the town now that it is burnt to ashes?

Ath. First go back to the former point; wilt thou make common cause with me in the scheme I purpose?

Pos. Ay surely; but I would fain learn thy wishes, whether thou art come to help Achæans or Phrygians.

Ath. I wish to give my former foes, the Trojans, joy, and on the Achæan host impose a return that they will rue.

Pos. Why leap'st thou thus from mood to mood? Thy love and hate both go too far, on whomsoever centred.

Ath. Dost not know the insult done to me and to the shrine I love?

Pos. Surely, in the hour that Aias tore Cassandra thence.

Ath. Yea, and the Achæans did naught, said naught to him.

Pos. And yet 'twas by thy mighty aid they sacked Ilium.

Ath. For which cause I would join with thee to work their bane.

Pos. My powers are ready at thy will. What is thy intent?

Ath. A returning fraught with woe will I impose on them.

Pos. While yet they stay on shore, or as they cross the briny deep?

Ath. When they have set sail from Ilium for their homes. On them will Zeus also send his rain and fearful hail, and inky tempests from the sky; yea, and he promises to grant me his levin-bolts to hurl on the Achæans and fire their ships. And do thou, for thy part, make the Ægean strait to roar with mighty billows and whirlpools, and fill Eubœa's hollow bay with corpses, that Achæans may learn henceforth to reverence my temples and regard all other deities.

Pos. So shall it be, for the boon thou cravest needs but few words. I will vex the broad Ægean sea; and the beach of Myconus and the reefs round Delos, Scyros and Lemnos too, and the cliffs of Caphareus shall be strown with many a corpse. Mount thou to Olympus, and taking from thy father's hand his lightning bolts, keep careful watch against the hour when Argos' host lets slip its cables. A fool is he who sacks the towns of men, with shrines and tombs, the dead man's hallowed home, for at the last he makes a desert round himself, and dies.

Hec. Lift thy head, unhappy lady, from the ground; thy

neck upraise; this is Troy no more, no longer am I queen in Ilium. Though fortune change, endure thy lot; sail with the stream, and follow fortune's tack, steer not thy barque of life against the tide, since chance must guide thy course. Ah me! ah me! What else but tears is now my hapless lot, whose country, children, husband, all are lost? Ah! the high-blown pride of ancestors! how cabined now! how brought to nothing after all! What woe must I suppress, or what declare? What plaintive dirge shall I awake? Ah, woe is me! the anguish I suffer lying here stretched upon this pallet hard! O my head, my temples, my side! Ah! could I but turn over, and lie now on this, now on that, to rest my back and spine, while ceaselessly my tearful wail ascends. For e'en this is music to the wretched, to chant their cheerless dirge of sorrow.

Ye swift-prowed ships, rowed to sacred Ilium o'er the deep dark sea, past the fair havens of Hellas, to the flute's ill-omened music and the dulcet voice of pipes, even to the bays of Troyland (alack the day!), wherein ye tied your hawsers, twisted handiwork from Egypt, in quest of that hateful wife of Menelaus, who brought disgrace on Castor, and on Eurotas foul reproach: murderess she of Priam, sire of fifty children, the cause why I, the hapless Hecuba, have wrecked my life upon this troublous strand. Oh that I should sit here o'er against the tent of Agamemnon! Forth from my home to slavery they hale my aged frame, while from my head in piteous wise the hair is shorn for grief. Ah! hapless wives of those mail-clad sons of Troy! Ah! poor maidens, luckless brides, come weep, for Ilium is now but a smouldering ruin; and I, like some mother-bird that o'er her fledgelings screams, will begin the strain; how different from that song I sang to the gods in days long past, as I leaned on Priam's staff, and beat with my foot in Phrygian time to lead the dance!

1ST HALF-CHO. O Hecuba! why these cries, these piercing

shrieks? What mean thy words? For I heard thy piteous wail echo through the building, and a pang of terror shoots through each captive Trojan's breast, as pent within these walls they mourn their slavish lot.

HEC. My child, e'en now the hands of Argive rowers are busy at their ships.

1ST HALF-CHO. Ah, woe is me! what is their intent? Will they really bear me hence in sorrow from my country in their fleet?

HEC. I know not, though I guess our doom.

1ST HALF-CHO. O misery! woe to us Trojan dames, soon to hear the order given, "Come forth from the house; the Argives are preparing to return."

HEC. Oh! do not bid the wild Cassandra leave her chamber, the frantic prophetess, for Argives to insult, nor to my griefs add yet another. Woe to thee, ill-fated Troy, thy sun is set; and woe to thy unhappy children, quick and dead alike, who are leaving thee behind!

2ND HALF-CHO. With trembling step, alas! I leave this tent of Agamemnon to learn of thee, my royal mistress, whether the Argives have resolved to take my wretched life, whether the sailors at the prow are making ready to ply their oars.

HEC. My child, a fearful dread[1] seized on my wakeful heart and sent me hither.

2ND HALF-CHO. Hath a herald from the Danai already come? To whom am I, poor captive, given as a slave?

HEC. Thou art not far from being allotted now.

2ND HALF-CHO. Woe worth the day! What Argive or Phthiotian chief will bear me far from Troy, alas! unto his home, or haply to some island fastness?

HEC. Ah me! ah me! Whose slave shall I become in my old age? in what far clime? a poor old drone, the

[1] Hartung after the Schol. reads as follows, *ὀρθρεύου σὰν ψυχάν· ἐκπλαγθεῖσ' ἦλθες φρίκᾳ.*

wretched copy of a corpse, set to keep the gate or tend their children, I who once held royal rank in Troy.

CHO. Woe, woe is thee! What piteous dirge wilt thou devise to mourn the outrage done thee? No more through Ida's looms shall I ply the shuttle to and fro. I look my last and latest on my children's bodies; henceforth shall I endure surpassing misery; it may be as the unwilling bride of some Hellene (perish the night and fortune that brings me to this!); it may be as a wretched slave I from Peirene's sacred fount shall draw their store of water.

Oh! be it ours to come to Theseus' famous realm, a land of joy! Never, never let me see Eurotas' swirling tide, hateful home of Helen, there to meet and be the slave of Menelaus, whose hand laid Troyland waste! Yon holy land by Peneus fed, nestling in all its beauty at Olympus' foot, is said, so have I heard, to be a very granary of wealth and teeming fruitage; next to the sacred soil of Theseus, I could wish to reach that land. They tell me too Hephæstus' home, beneath the shadow of Ætna, fronting Phœnicia, the mother of Sicilian hills, is famous for the crowns it gives to worth. Or may I find a home on that shore which lieth very nigh Ionia's sea, a land by Crathis watered, lovely stream, that dyes the hair an auburn tint, feeding with its holy waves and making glad therewith the home of heroes good and true.

But mark! a herald from the host of Danai, with store of fresh proclamations, comes hasting hither. What is his errand? what saith he? List, for we are slaves to Dorian lords henceforth.

TAL. Hecuba, thou knowest me from my many journeys to and fro as herald 'twixt the Achæan host and Troy; no stranger I to thee, lady, even aforetime, I Talthybius, now sent with a fresh message.

HEC. Ah, kind friends, 'tis come! what I so long have dreaded.

TAL. The lot has decided your fates already, if that was what you feared.

HEC. Ah me! What city didst thou say, Thessalian, Phthian, or Cadmean?

TAL. Each warrior took his prize in turn; ye were not all at once assigned.

HEC. To whom hath the lot assigned us severally? Which of us Trojan dames doth a happy fortune await?

TAL. I know, but ask thy questions separately, not all at once.

HEC. Then tell me, whose prize is my daughter, hapless Cassandra?

TAL. King Agamemnon hath chosen her out for himself.

HEC. To be the slave-girl of his Spartan wife? Ah me!

TAL. Nay, to share with him his stealthy love.

HEC. What! Phœbus' virgin-priestess, to whom the god with golden locks granted the boon of maidenhood?

TAL. The dart of love hath pierced his heart, love for the frenzied maid.

HEC. Daughter, cast from thee the sacred keys, and from thy body tear the holy wreaths that drape thee in their folds.

TAL. Why! is it not an honour high that she should win our monarch's love?

HEC. What have ye done to her whom late ye took from me,—my child?

TAL. Dost mean Polyxena, or whom dost thou inquire about?

HEC. To whom hath the lot assigned her?

TAL. To minister at Achilles' tomb hath been appointed her.

HEC. Woe is me! I the mother of a dead man's slave! What custom, what ordinance is this amongst Hellenes, good sir?

TAL. Count thy daughter happy: 'tis well with her.

HEC. What wild words are these? say, is she still alive?

TAL. Her fate is one that sets her free from trouble.

HEC. And what of mail-clad Hector's wife, sad Andromache? declare her fate.

TAL. She too was a chosen prize; Achilles' son did take her.

HEC. As for me whose hair is white with age, who need to hold a staff to be to me a third foot, whose servant am I to be?

TAL. Odysseus, king of Ithaca, hath taken thee to be his slave.

HEC. O God! Now smite the close-shorn head! tear your cheeks with your nails. God help me! I have fallen as a slave to a treacherous foe I hate, a monster of lawlessness, one that by his double tongue hath turned against us all that once was friendly in his camp, changing this for that and that for this again. Oh weep for me, ye Trojan dames! Undone! undone and lost! ah woe! a victim to a most unhappy lot!

CHO. Thy fate, royal mistress, now thou knowest: but for me, what Hellene or Achæan is master of my destiny?

TAL. Ho, servants! haste and bring Cassandra forth to me here, that I may place her in our captain's hands, and then conduct to the rest of the chiefs the captives each hath had assigned. Ha! what is the blaze of torches there within? What do these Trojan dames? Are they firing the chambers, because they must leave this land and be carried away to Argos? Are they setting themselves aflame in their longing for death? Of a truth the free bear their troubles in cases like this with a stiff neck. Ho, there! open! lest their deed, which suits them well but finds small favour with the Achæans, bring blame on me.

HEC. 'Tis not that they are setting aught ablaze, but my child Cassandra, frenzied maid, comes rushing wildly hither.

CAS. Bring the light, uplift and show its flame! I am

doing the god's service, see! see! making his shrine to glow with tapers bright. O Hymen, king of marriage! blest is the bridegroom; blest am I also, the maiden soon to wed a princely lord in Argos. Hail Hymen, king of marriage! Since thou, my mother, art ever busied with tears and lamentations in thy mourning for my father's death and for our country dear, I at my own nuptials am making this torch to blaze and show its light, in thy honour, O Hymen, king of marriage! Grant thy light too, Hecate, at the maiden's wedding, as the custom is. Nimbly lift the foot aloft, lead on the dance, with cries of joy, as if to greet my father's happy fate. To dance I hold a sacred duty; come, Phœbus, lead the way, for 'tis in thy temple mid thy bay-trees that I minister. Hail Hymen, god of marriage! Hymen, hail! Come, mother mine, and join the dance, link thy steps with me, and circle in the gladsome measure, now here, now there. Salute the bride on her wedding-day with hymns and cries of joy. Come, ye maids of Phrygia in raiment fair, sing my marriage with the husband fate ordains that I should wed.

Cho. Hold the frantic maiden, royal mistress mine, lest with nimble foot she rush to the Argive army.

Hec. Thou god of fire, 'tis thine to light the bridal torch for men, but piteous is the flame thou kindlest here, beyond my blackest bodings. Ah, my child! how little did I ever dream that such would be thy marriage, a captive, and of Argos too! Give up the torch to me; thou dost not bear its blaze aright in thy wild frantic course, nor have thy afflictions left thee in thy sober senses,[1] but still art thou as frantic as before. Take in those torches, Trojan friends, and for her wedding madrigals weep your tears instead.

Cas. O mother, crown my head with victor's wreaths;

[1] Hartung alters the MS. into *σ' αἱ . . . σοφὴν ἔθηκαν*, which in the absence of any other instance of *σωφρονεῖν* in a transitive sense seems preferable to Nauck's *σ' ἐσωφρονήκασι* or Paley's *σαὶ τύχαι σεσωφρονήκασι*.

rejoice in my royal match; lead me to my lord; nay, if thou find me loth at all, thrust me there by force; for if Loxias be indeed a prophet, Agamemnon, that famous king of the Achæans, will find in me a bride more fraught with woe to him than Helen. For I will slay him and lay waste his home to avenge my father's and my brethren's death. But of the deed itself I will not speak; nor will I tell of that axe which shall sever my neck and the necks of others, or of the conflict ending in a mother's death, which my marriage shall cause, nor of the overthrow of Atreus' house; but I, for all my frenzy, will so far rise above my frantic fit, that I will prove this city happier far than those Achæans, who for the sake of one woman and one man's love of her have lost a countless host in seeking Helen. Their captain too, whom men call wise, hath lost for what he hated most what most he prized, yielding to his brother for a woman's sake,—and she a willing prize whom no man forced,—the joy he had of his own children in his home. For from the day that they did land upon Scamander's strand, their doom began, not for loss of stolen frontier nor yet for fatherland with frowning towers; whomso Ares slew, those never saw their babes again, nor were they shrouded for the tomb by hand of wife, but in a foreign land they lie. At home the case was still the same; wives were dying widows, parents were left childless in their homes, having reared their sons for others, and none is left to make libations of blood upon the ground before their tombs. Truly to such praise as this their host can make an ample claim. 'Tis better to pass their shame in silence by, nor be mine the Muse to tell that evil tale. But the Trojans were dying, first for their fatherland, fairest fame to win; whomso the sword laid low, all these found friends to bear their bodies home and were laid to rest in the bosom of their native land, their funeral rites all duly paid by duteous hands. And all such Phrygians as escaped the warrior's death lived ever day by day with wife

and children by them,—joys the Achæans had left behind. As for Hector and his griefs, prithee hear how stands the case; he is dead and gone, but still his fame remains as bravest of the brave, and this was a result of the Achæans' coming; for had they remained at home, his worth would have gone unnoticed. So too with Paris, he married the daughter of Zeus, whereas, had he never done so, the alliance he made in his family would have been forgotten. Whoso is wise should fly from making war; but if he be brought to this pass, a noble death will crown his city with glory, a coward's end with shame. Wherefore, mother mine, thou shouldst not pity thy country or my spousal, for this my marriage will destroy those whom thou and I most hate.

Cho. How sweetly at thy own sad lot thou smilest, chanting a strain, which, spite of thee, may prove thee wrong!

Tal. Had not Apollo turned thy wits astray, thou shouldst not for nothing have sent my chiefs with such ominous predictions forth on their way. But, after all, these lofty minds, reputed wise, are nothing better than those that are held as naught. For that mighty king of all Hellas, own son of Atreus, has yielded to a passion for this mad maiden of all others; though I am poor enough, yet would I ne'er have chosen such a wife as this. As for thee, since thy senses are not whole, I give thy taunts 'gainst Argos and thy praise of Troy to the winds to carry away. Follow me now to the ships to grace the wedding of our chief. And thou too follow, whensoe'er the son of Laertes demands thy presence, for thou wilt serve a mistress most discreet, as all declare who came to Ilium.

Cas. A clever fellow this menial! Why is it heralds hold the name they do? All men unite in hating with one common hate the servants who attend on kings or governments. Thou sayest my mother shall come to the halls of

Odysseus; where then be Apollo's words, so clear to me in their interpretation, which declare that here she shall die? What else remains, I will not taunt her with. Little knows he, the luckless wight, the sufferings that await him; or how these ills I and my Phrygians endure shall one day seem to him precious as gold. For beyond the ten long years spent at Troy he shall drag out other ten and then come to his country all alone, by the route where fell Charybdis lurks in a narrow channel 'twixt the rocks; past Cyclops the savage shepherd,[1] and Ligurian Circe that turneth men to swine; shipwrecked oft upon the salt sea-wave: fain to eat the lotus, and the sacred cattle of the sun, whose flesh shall utter in the days to come a human voice, fraught with misery to Odysseus. But to briefly end this history, he shall descend alive to Hades, and, though he 'scape the waters' flood, yet shall he find a thousand troubles in his home when he arrives. Enough! why do I recount the troubles of Odysseus? Lead on, that I forthwith may wed my husband for his home in Hades' halls. Base thou art, and basely shalt thou be buried, in the dead of night when day is done, thou captain of that host of Danai, who thinkest so proudly of thy fortune! Yea, and my corpse cast forth in nakedness shall the rocky chasm with its flood of wintry waters give to wild beasts to make their meal upon, hard by my husband's tomb, me the handmaid of Apollo. Farewell, ye garlands of that god most dear to me! farewell, ye mystic symbols! I here resign your feasts, my joy in days gone by. Go, I tear ye from my body, that, while yet mine honour is intact, I may give them to the rushing winds to waft to thee, my prince of prophecy! Where is yon general's ship? Whither must I go to take my place thereon? Lose no further time in watching for a favouring breeze to fill thy sails, doomed as thou art to carry from this land one of the three avenging spirits. Fare thee well, mother mine! dry

[1] Scaliger proposed ὀμοβάτης, which Nauck adopts.

thy tears, O country dear! yet a little while, my brothers sleeping in the tomb and my own father true, and ye shall welcome me; yet shall victory crown my advent 'mongst the dead, when I have overthrown the home of our destroyers, the house of the sons of Atreus.

Cho. Ye guardians of the grey-haired Hecuba, see how your mistress is sinking speechless to the ground! Take hold of her! will ye let her fall, ye worthless slaves? lift up again, from where it lies, her silvered head.

Hec. Leave me lying where I fell, my maidens—unwelcome service grows not welcome ever—my sufferings now, my troubles past, afflictions yet to come, all claim this lowly posture. Gods of heaven! small help I find in calling such allies, yet is there something in the form of invoking heaven, whenso we fall on evil days. First will I descant upon my former blessings; so shall I inspire the greater pity for my present woes. Born to royal estate and wedded to a royal lord, I was the mother of a race of gallant sons; no mere ciphers they, but Phrygia's chiefest pride, children such as no Trojan or Hellenic or barbarian mother ever had to boast. All these have I seen slain by the spear of Hellas, and at their tombs have I shorn off my hair; with these my eyes I saw their sire, my Priam, butchered on his own hearth, and my city captured, nor did others bring this bitter news to me. The maidens I brought up to see chosen for some marriage high, for strangers have I reared them, and seen them snatched away. Nevermore can I hope to be seen by them, nor shall my eyes behold them ever in the days to come. And last, to crown my misery, shall I be brought to Hellas, a slave in my old age. And there the tasks that least befit the evening of my life will they impose on me, to watch their gates and keep the keys, me Hector's mother, or bake their bread, and on the ground instead of my royal bed lay down my shrunken limbs, with tattered rags about my wasted frame, a shameful

garb for those who once were prosperous. Ah, woe is me! and this is what I bear and am to bear for one weak woman's wooing! O my daughter, O Cassandra! whom gods have summoned to their frenzied train, how cruel the lot that ends thy virgin days! And thou, Polyxena! my child of sorrow, where, oh! where art thou? None of all the many sons and daughters I have born comes to aid a wretched mother. Why then raise me up? What hope is left us? Guide me, who erst trod so daintily the streets of Troy, but now am but a slave, to a bed upon the ground, nigh some rocky ridge, that thence I may cast me down and perish, after I have wasted my body with weeping.[1] Of all the prosperous crowd, count none a happy man before he die.

Cho. Sing me, Muse, a tale of Troy, a funeral dirge in strains unheard as yet, with tears the while; for now will I uplift for Troy a piteous chant, telling how I met my doom and fell a wretched captive to the Argives by reason of a four-footed beast that moved on wheels, in the hour that Achæa's sons left at our gates that horse, loud rumbling[2] on its way, with its trappings of gold and its freight of warriors; and our folk cried out as they stood upon the rocky citadel, "Up now ye whose toil is o'er, and drag this sacred image to the shrine of the Zeus-born maiden, goddess of our Ilium!" Forth from his house came every youth and every grey-head too; and with songs of joy they took the fatal snare within. Then hastened all the race of Phrygia to the gates, to make the goddess[3] a present of an Argive band ambushed in the polished mountain-pine, Dardania's ruin, a welcome gift to be to her, the virgin queen of deathless steeds; and with nooses of cord they dragged it, as it had been a ship's dark hull, to the stone-built fane of the

[1] Hartung's emendation ἀγραις greatly improves the sense.

[2] Hartung reads πρέποντα.

[3] Reading θεᾷ. The Schol. clearly read θέᾳ, interpreting θέᾳ δώσων by θεασόμενος.

goddess Pallas, and set it on that floor so soon to drink our country's blood. But, as they laboured and made merry, came on the pitchy night; loud the Libyan flute was sounding, and Phrygian songs awoke, while maidens beat the ground with airy foot, uplifting their gladsome song; and in the halls a blaze of torchlight shed [1] its flickering shadows on sleeping eyes. In that hour around the house was I singing as I danced to that maiden of the hills, the child of Zeus; when lo! there rang along the town a cry of death which filled the homes of Troy, and little babes in terror clung about their mothers' skirts, as forth from their ambush came the warrior-band, the handiwork of maiden Pallas. Anon the altars ran with Phrygian blood, and desolation reigned o'er every bed where young men lay beheaded, a glorious crown for Hellas won, ay, for her, the nurse of youth, but for our Phrygian fatherland a bitter grief. Look, Hecuba! dost see Andromache advancing hither on a foreign car? and with her, clasped to her throbbing breast, is her dear Astyanax, Hector's child.

HEC. Whither art thou borne, unhappy wife, mounted on that car, side by side with Hector's brazen arms and Phrygian spoils of war, with which Achilles' son will deck the shrines of Phthia on his return from Troy?

AND. My Achæan masters drag me hence.

HEC. Woe is thee!

AND. Why dost thou in note of woe utter the dirge that is mine?

HEC. Ah me!

AND. For these sorrows.

HEC. O Zeus!

AND. And for this calamity.

HEC. O my children!

AND. Our day is past.

[1] There is some corruption here, but no satisfactory emendation has been yet offered. One editor proposes *ἀπεδίωκε νυκτός*.

HEC. Joy is fled, and Troy o'erthrown.
AND. Woe is me!
HEC. Dead too all my gallant sons!
AND. Alack and well-a-day!
HEC. Ah me for my—
AND. Misery!
HEC. Piteous the fate
AND. Of our city,
HEC. Smouldering in the smoke.
AND. Come, my husband, come to me!
HEC. Ah hapless wife! thou callest on my son who lieth in the tomb.
AND. Thy wife's defender, come!
HEC. Do thou, who erst didst make the Achæans grieve, eldest of the sons I bare to Priam in the days gone by, take me to thy rest in Hades' halls!
AND. Bitter are these regrets, unhappy mother, bitter these woes to bear; our city ruined, and sorrow evermore to sorrow added, through the will of angry heaven, since the day that son[1] of thine escaped his doom, he that for a bride accursed brought destruction on the Trojan citadel. There lie the gory corpses of the slain by the shrine of Pallas for vultures to carry off; and Troy is come to slavery's yoke.
HEC. O my country, O unhappy land, I weep for thee now left behind; now dost thou behold thy piteous end; and thee, my house, I weep, wherein I suffered travail. O my children! reft of her city as your mother is, she now is losing you. Oh, what mourning and what sorrow! oh, what endless streams of tears in our houses! The dead alone forget their griefs and never shed a tear.

[1] *i.e.*, Paris, who had been exposed to die on account of an oracle foretelling the misery he would cause if he grew to man's estate; but shepherds had found him on the hills and reared him.

CHO. What sweet relief to sufferers 'tis to weep, to mourn, lament, and chant the dirge that tells of grief!

AND. Dost thou see this, mother of that Hector, who once laid low in battle many a son of Argos?

HEC. I see that it is heaven's way to exalt what men accounted naught, and ruin what they most esteemed.

AND. Hence with my child as booty am I borne; the noble are to slavery brought—a bitter, bitter change.

HEC. This is necessity's grim law; it was but now Cassandra was torn with brutal violence from my arms.

AND. Alas, alas! it seems a second Aias hath appeared to wrong thy daughter; but there be other ills for thee.

HEC. Ay, beyond all count or measure are my sorrows; evil vies with evil in the struggle to be first.

AND. Thy daughter Polyxena is dead, slain at Achilles' tomb, an offering to his lifeless corpse.

HEC. O woe is me! This is that riddle Talthybius long since told me, a truth obscurely uttered.

AND. I saw her with mine eyes; so I alighted from the chariot, and covered her corpse with a mantle, and smote upon my breast.

HEC. Alas! my child, for thy unhallowed sacrifice! and yet again, ah me! for this thy shameful death!

AND. Her death was even as it was, and yet that death of hers was after all a happier fate than this my life.

HEC. Death and life are not the same, my child; the one is annihilation, the other keeps a place for hope.

AND. Hear, O mother[1] of children! give ear to what I urge so well, that I may cheer my drooping spirit. 'Tis all one, I say, ne'er to have been born and to be dead, and better far is death than life with misery. For the dead feel no sorrow any more and know no grief; but he who has known prosperity and has fallen on evil days feels his spirit

[1] Musgrave reads *οὐ* for the second *ὦ*. Dindorf rejects the first line of this speech.

straying from the scene of former joys. Now that child of thine is dead as though she ne'er had seen the light, and little she recks of her calamity; whereas I, who aimed at a fair repute, though I won a higher lot than most, yet missed my luck in life. For all that stamps the wife a woman chaste, I strove to do in Hector's home. In the first place, whether there is a slur upon a woman, or whether there is not, the very fact of her not staying at home brings in its train an evil name; therefore I gave up any wish to do so, and abode ever within my house, nor would I admit the clever gossip women love, but conscious of a heart that told an honest tale I was content therewith. And ever would I keep a silent tongue and modest eye before my lord; and well I knew where I might rule my lord, and where 'twas best to yield to him; the fame whereof hath reached the Achæan host, and proved my ruin; for when I was taken captive, Achilles' son would have me as his wife, and I must serve in the house of murderers. And[1] if I set aside my love for Hector, and ope my heart to this new lord, I shall appear a traitress to the dead, while, if I hate him, I shall incur my master's displeasure. And yet they say a single night removes a woman's dislike for her husband; nay, I do hate the woman who, when she hath lost her former lord, transfers her love by marrying another. Not e'en the horse, if from his fellow torn, will cheerfully draw the yoke; and yet the brutes have neither speech nor sense to help them, and are by nature man's inferiors. O Hector mine! in thee I found a husband amply dowered with wisdom, noble birth and fortune, a brave man and a mighty; whilst thou didst take me from my father's house a spotless bride, thyself the first to make this maiden wife. But now death hath claimed thee, and I to Hellas am soon to sail, a captive doomed to wear the yoke of slavery. Hath not then

[1] Dindorf condemns lines 656—667. Nauck brackets 662 and 663 as spurious.

the dead Polyxena, for whom thou wailest, less evil to bear than I? I have not so much as hope, the last resource of every human heart, nor do I beguile myself with dreams of future bliss, the very thought whereof is sweet.

CHO. Thou art in the self-same plight as I; thy lamentations for thyself remind me of my own sad case.

HEC. I never yet have set foot on a ship's deck, though I have seen such things in pictures and know of them from hearsay. Now sailors, if there come a storm of moderate force, are all eagerness to save themselves by toil; one at the tiller stands, another sets himself to work the sheets, a third meantime is baling out the ship; but if tempestuous waves arise to overwhelm them, they yield to fortune and commit themselves to the driving billows. Even so I, by reason of my countless troubles, am dumb and forbear to say a word; for Heaven with its surge of misery is too strong for me. Cease, Oh cease, my darling child, to speak of Hector's fate; no tears of thine can save him; honour thy present lord, offering thy sweet nature as the bait to win him. If thou do this, thou wilt cheer thy friends as well as thyself, and thou shalt rear my Hector's child to lend stout aid to Ilium, that so thy children in the after-time may build her up again, and our city yet be stablished. But lo! our talk must take a different turn; who is this Achæan menial I see coming hither, sent to tell us of some new design?

TAL. Oh hate me not, thou that erst wert Hector's wife, the bravest of the Phrygians! for my tongue would fain not tell that which the Danai and sons of Pelops both command.

AND. What is it? Thy prelude bodeth evil news.

TAL. 'Tis decreed thy son is—how can I tell my news?

AND. Surely not to have a different master from me?

TAL. None of all Achæa's chiefs shall ever lord it over him.

AND. Is it their will to leave him here, a remnant yet of Phrygia's race?

TAL. I know no words to break the sorrow lightly to thee.

AND. I thank thee for thy consideration, unless indeed thou hast good news to tell.

TAL. They mean to slay thy son; there is my hateful message to thee.

AND. O God! this is worse tidings than my forced marriage.

TAL. So spake Odysseus to the assembled Hellenes, and his word prevails.

AND. Oh once again ah me! there is no measure in the woes I bear.

TAL. He said they should not rear so brave a father's son.

AND. May such counsels yet prevail about children of his!

TAL. From Troy's battlements he must be thrown. Let it be even so, and thou wilt show more wisdom; cling not to him, but bear thy sorrows with heroic heart, nor in thy weakness deem that thou art strong. For nowhere hast thou any help; consider this thou must; thy husband and thy city are no more, so thou art in our power, and I alone am match enough for one weak woman; wherefore I would not see thee bent on strife, or any course to bring thee shame or hate, nor would I hear thee rashly curse the Achæans. For if thou say aught whereat the host grow wroth, this child will find no burial nor pity either. But if thou hold thy peace and with composure take thy fate, thou wilt not leave his corpse unburied, and thyself wilt find more favour with the Achæans.

AND. My child! my own sweet babe and priceless treasure! thy death the foe demands, and thou must leave thy wretched mother. That[1] which saves the lives of others, proves thy destruction, even thy sire's nobility; to thee thy father's valiancy has proved no boon. O the woful wedding rites, that brought me erst to Hector's home, hoping to be the

[1] Nauck considers 737 and 738 spurious.

mother of a son that should rule o'er Asia's fruitful fields instead of serving as a victim to the sons of Danaus! Dost weep, my babe? dost know thy hapless fate? Why clutch me with thy hands and to my garment cling, nestling like a tender chick beneath my wing? Hector will not rise again and come gripping his famous spear to bring thee salvation; no kinsman of thy sire appears, nor might of Phrygian hosts; one awful headlong leap from the dizzy height and thou wilt dash out thy life with none to pity thee! Oh to clasp thy tender limbs, a mother's fondest joy! Oh to breathe thy fragrant breath! In vain it seems these breasts did suckle thee, wrapped in thy swaddling-clothes; all for naught I used to toil and wore myself away! Kiss thy mother now for the last time, nestle to her that bare thee, twine thy arms about my neck and join thy lips to mine! O ye Hellenes, cunning to devise new forms of cruelty, why slay this child who never wronged any? Thou daughter of Tyndarus, thou art no child of Zeus, but sprung, I trow, of many a sire, first of some evil demon, next of Envy, then of Murder and of Death, and every horror that the earth begets. That Zeus was never sire of thine I boldly do assert, bane as thou hast been to many a Hellene and barbarian too. Destruction catch thee! Those fair eyes of thine have brought a shameful ruin on the fields of glorious Troy. Take the babe and bear him hence, hurl him down if so ye list, then feast upon his flesh! 'Tis heaven's high will we perish, and I cannot ward the deadly stroke from my child. Hide me and my misery; cast me into the ship's hold; for 'tis to a fair wedding I am going, now that I have lost my child!

Cho. Unhappy Troy! thy thousands thou hast lost for one woman's sake and her accursed wooing.

Tal. Come, child, leave fond embracing of thy woful mother, and mount the high coronal of thy ancestral towers, there to draw thy parting breath, as is ordained. Take him hence. His should the duty be to do such herald's work

whose heart knows no pity and who loveth ruthlessness more than my soul doth.

[*Exeunt* ANDROMACHE *and* TALTHYBIUS *with* ASTYANAX.

HEC. O child, son of my hapless boy, an unjust fate robs me and thy mother of thy life. How is it with me? What can I do for thee, my luckless babe? for thee I smite upon my head and beat my breast, my only gift; for that alone is in my power. Woe for my city! woe for thee! Is not our cup full? What is wanting now to our utter and immediate ruin?

CHO. O Telamon, King of Salamis, the feeding-ground of bees, who hast thy home in a sea-girt isle that lieth nigh the holy hills where first Athena made the grey olive-branch to appear, a crown for heavenly heads and a glory unto happy Athens, thou didst come in knightly brotherhood with that great archer, Alcmena's son, to sack our city Ilium, in days gone by, [on thy advent from Hellas,] what time he led the chosen flower of Hellas, vexed for the steeds[1] denied him, and at the fair stream of Simois he stayed his sea-borne ship and fastened cables to the stern, and forth therefrom he took the bow his hand could deftly shoot, to be the doom of Laomedon; and with the ruddy breath of fire he wasted the masonry squared by Phœbus' line and chisel, and sacked the land of Troy; so twice in two attacks hath the blood-stained spear destroyed Dardania's walls.

In vain, it seems, thou Phrygian boy,[2] pacing with dainty step amid thy golden chalices, dost thou fill high the cup of Zeus, a service passing fair; seeing that the land of thy birth is being consumed by fire. The shore re-echoes to our cries; and, as a bird bewails its young, so we bewail our hus-

[1] Heracles had destroyed a sea-monster for Laomedon on condition of receiving a gift of horses for his trouble, and, on Laomedon repudiating the promise, sacked Troy

[2] Ganymede, a son of Tros.

bands or our children, or our grey-haired mothers. The dew-fed springs where thou didst bathe, the course where thou didst train, are now no more; but thou beside the throne of Zeus art sitting with a calm, sweet smile upon thy fair young face, while the spear of Hellas lays the land of Priam waste. Ah! Love, Love, who once didst seek these Dardan halls, deep-seated in the hearts of heavenly gods, how high didst thou make Troy to tower in those days, allying her with deities! But I will cease to urge reproaches against Zeus; for white-winged dawn, whose light to man is dear, turned a baleful eye upon our land and watched the ruin of our citadel, though she had within her bridal bower a husband[1] from this land, whom on a day a car of gold and spangled stars caught up and carried thither, great source of hope to his native country; but all the love the gods once had for Troy is passed away.

MEN. Hail! thou radiant orb by whose fair light I now shall capture her that was my wife, e'en[2] Helen; for I am that Menelaus, who hath toiled so hard, I and Achæa's host. To Troy I came, not so much as men suppose to take this woman, but to punish him who from my house stole my wife, traitor to my hospitality. But he, by heaven's will, hath paid the penalty, ruined, and his country too, by the spear of Hellas. And I am come to bear that Spartan woman hence —wife I have no mind to call her, though she once was mine; for now she is but one among the other Trojan dames who share these tents as captives. For they,—the very men who toiled to take her with the spear,—have granted her to me to slay, or, if I will, to spare and carry back with me to Argos. Now my purpose is not to put her to death in Troy, but to carry her to Hellas in my sea-borne ship, and then surrender her to death, a recompense to all whose friends were slain in Ilium. Ho! my trusty men, enter the

[1] Referring to the union of Aurora and Tithonus.

[2] Herwerden rejects lines 862—863, as spurious.

tent, and drag her out to me by her hair with many a murder foul; and when a favouring breeze shall blow, to Hellas will we convey her.

Hec. O thou that dost support the earth and restest thereupon, whosoe'er thou art, a riddle past our ken! be thou Zeus, or natural necessity, or man's intellect, to thee I pray; for, though thou treadest o'er a noiseless path, all thy dealings with mankind are by justice guided.

Men. How now? Strange the prayer thou offerest unto heaven!

Hec. I thank thee, Menelaus, if thou wilt slay that wife of thine. Yet shun the sight of her, lest she smite thee with regret. For she ensnares the eyes of men, o'erthrows their towns, and burns their houses, so potent are her witcheries! Well I know her; so dost thou and those her victims too.

Hel. Menelaus! this prelude well may fill me with alarm; for I am haled with violence by thy servants' hands and brought before these tents. Still, though I am well-nigh sure thou hatest me, yet would I fain inquire what thou and Hellas have decided about my life.

Men. To judge thy case required no great exactness;[1] the host with one consent,—that host whom thou didst wrong,—handed thee over to me to die.

Hel. May I answer this decision, proving that my death, if to die I am, will be unjust?

Men. I came not to argue, but to slay thee.

Hec. Hear her, Menelaus; let her not die for want of that, and let me answer her again, for thou knowest naught of her villainies in Troy; and the whole case, if thus summed up, will insure her death against all chance of an escape.

Men. This boon needs leisure; still, if she wishes to speak, the leave is given. Yet will I grant her this because of thy words, that she may hear them, and not for her own sake.

[1] Reading οὐκ εἰς ἀκριβὲς ἦλθες. The Schol. read ἦλθεν.

HEL. Perhaps thou wilt not answer me, from counting me a foe, whether my words seem good or ill. Yet will I put my charges and thine over against each other, and then reply to the accusations I suppose thou wilt advance against me. First, then, she was the author of these troubles by giving birth to Paris; next, old Priam ruined Troy and me, because he did not slay his babe Alexander, baleful semblance of a fire-brand,[1] long ago. Hear what followed. This Paris was to judge the claims of three rival goddesses; so Pallas offered him command of all the Phrygians, and the destruction of Hellas; Hera promised he should spread his dominion over Asia, and the utmost bounds of Europe, if[2] he would decide for her; but Cypris spoke in rapture of my loveliness, and promised him this boon, if she should have the preference o'er those twain for beauty; now mark the inference I deduce from this; Cypris won the day o'er them, and thus far hath my marriage proved of benefit to Hellas, that ye are not subject to barbarian rule, neither vanquished in the strife, nor yet by tyrants crushed. What Hellas gained, was ruin to me, a victim for my beauty sold, and now am I reproached for that which should have set a crown upon my head. But thou wilt say I am silent on the real matter at issue, how it was I started forth and left thy house by stealth. With no mean goddess at his side he came, my evil genius, call him Alexander or Paris, as thou wilt; and him didst thou, thrice guilty wretch, leave behind thee in thy house, and sail away from Sparta to the land of Crete. Enough of this! For all that followed I must question my own heart, not thee; what frantic thought led me to follow the stranger from thy house, traitress to my country and my home? Punish the goddess, show thyself more mighty e'en than Zeus, who, though he

[1] Hecuba had dreamt she would bear a son who would cause the ruin of Troy; on the birth of Paris an oracle confirmed her fears.

[2] Line 928 is regarded by Nauck as spurious.

lords it o'er the other gods, is yet her slave; wherefore I may well be pardoned. Still, from hence thou mightest draw a specious argument against me; when Paris died, and Earth concealed his corpse, I should have left his house and sought the Argive fleet, since my marriage was no longer in the hands of gods. That was what I fain had done; yea, and the warders on the towers and watchmen on the walls can bear me witness, for oft they found me seeking to let myself down stealthily by cords from the battlements; but there was that new husband, Deiphobus, that carried me off by force to be his wife against the will of Troy. How then, my lord, could I be justly [1] put to death by thee, with any show of right, seeing that he wedded me against my will, and those my other natural gifts have served a bitter slavery, instead of leading on to triumph? If 'tis thy will indeed to master gods, that very wish displays thy folly.

Cho. O my royal mistress, defend thy children's and thy country's cause, bringing to naught her persuasive arguments, for she pleads well in spite of all her villainy; 'tis monstrous this!

Hec. First will I take up the cause of those goddesses, and prove how she perverts the truth. For I can ne'er believe that Hera or the maiden Pallas would have been guilty of such folly, as to sell, the one, her Argos to barbarians, or that Pallas e'er would make her Athens subject to the Phrygians, coming as they did in mere wanton sport to Ida to contest the palm of beauty. For why should goddess Hera set her heart so much on such a prize? Was it to win a nobler lord than Zeus? or was Athena bent on finding 'mongst the gods a husband, she who in her dislike of marriage won from her sire the boon of remaining unwed?

[1] Hartung, to avoid the tautology, reads ἄνευ δικης for ἂν ἐνδικως. Herwerden, keeping this, conjectures δικασθεῖσ' for δικαίως in the next line.

Seek not to impute folly to the goddesses, in the attempt to gloze o'er thy own sin; never wilt thou persuade the wise. Next thou hast said,—what well may make men jeer,—that Cypris came with my son to the house of Menelaus. Could she not have stayed quietly in heaven and brought thee and Amyclæ to boot to Ilium? Nay! my son was passing fair, and when thou sawest him thy fancy straight became thy Cypris; for every sensual act that men commit, they lay upon this goddess, and rightly does her name of Aphrodite[1] begin the word for "senselessness"; so when thou didst catch sight of him in gorgeous foreign garb, ablaze with gold, thy senses utterly forsook thee. Yea, for in Argos thou hadst moved in simple state, but, once free of Sparta, 'twas thy fond hope to deluge by thy lavish outlay Phrygia's town, that flowed with gold; nor was the palace of Menelaus rich enough for thy luxury to riot in. Ha! my son carried thee off by force, so thou sayest; what Spartan saw this? what cry for help didst thou ever raise, though Castor was still alive, a vigorous youth, and his brother also, not yet amid the stars? Then when thou wert come to Troy, and the Argives were on thy track, and the mortal combat was begun, whenever tidings came to thee of Menelaus' prowess, him wouldst thou praise, to grieve my son, because he had so powerful a rival in his love; but if so the Trojans prospered, Menelaus was nothing to thee. Thy eye was fixed on Fortune, and by such practice wert thou careful to follow in her steps, careless of virtue's cause. And then, in spite of all, thou dost assert that thou didst try to let thyself down from the towers by stealth with twisted cords, as if loth to stay? Pray then, wert thou ever found fastening the noose about thy neck, or whetting the knife, as a noble wife would have done in regret for her

[1] It is almost impossible to reproduce the play on words in Ἀφροδίτη and ἀφροσύνη; perhaps the nearest approach would be "sensuality" and "senseless."

former husband? And yet full oft I advised thee saying, "Get thee gone, daughter, and let my sons take other brides; I will help thee to steal away, and convey thee to the Achæan fleet; oh end the strife 'twixt us and Hellas!" But this was bitter in thy ears. For thou wert wantoning in Alexander's house, fain to have obeisance done thee by barbarians. Yes, 'twas a proud time for thee; and now after all this thou hast bedizened thyself, and come forth and hast dared to appear under the same sky as thy husband, revolting wretch! Better hadst thou come in tattered raiment, cowering humbly in terror, with hair shorn short, if for thy past sins thy feeling were one of shame rather than effrontery. O Menelaus, hear the conclusion of my argument; crown Hellas by slaying her as she deserves, and establish this law for all others of her sex, e'en death to every traitress to her husband.

Cho. Avenge thee, Menelaus, on thy wife, as is worthy of thy home and ancestors, clear thyself from the reproach of effeminacy at the lips of Hellas, and let thy foes see thy spirit.

Men. Thy thoughts with mine do coincide, that she, without constraint, left my palace, and sought a stranger's love, and now Cypris is introduced for mere bluster. Away to those who shall stone thee, and by thy speedy death requite the weary toils of the Achæans, that thou mayst learn not to bring shame on me!

Hel. Oh, by thy knees, I implore thee, impute not that heaven-sent affliction to me, nor slay me; pardon, I entreat!

Hec. Be not false to thy allies, whose death this woman caused; on their behalf, and for my children's sake, I sue to thee.

Men. Peace, reverend dame; to her I pay no heed. Lo! I bid my servants take her hence, aboard the ship, wherein she is to sail.

HEC. Oh never let her set foot within the same ship as thee.

MEN. How now? is she heavier than of yore?

HEC. Who loveth once, must love alway.

MEN. Why, that depends how those we love are minded. But thy wish shall be granted; she shall not set foot upon the same ship with me; for thy advice is surely sound; and when she comes to Argos she shall die a shameful death as is her due, and impress the need of chastity on all her sex; no easy task; yet shall her fate strike their foolish hearts with terror, e'en though they be more lost to shame[1] than she.

[*Exit* MENELAUS, *dragging* HELEN *with him.*

CHO. So then thou hast delivered into Achæa's hand, O Zeus, thy shrine in Ilium and thy fragrant altar, the offerings of burnt sacrifice with smoke of myrrh to heaven uprising, and holy Pergamos, and glens of Ida tangled with the ivy's growth, where rills of melting snow pour down their flood, a holy sun-lit land that bounds the world and takes the god's first rays! Gone are thy sacrifices! gone the dancer's cheerful shout! gone the vigils of the gods as night closed in! Thy images of carven gold are now no more; and Phrygia's holy festivals, twelve times a year, at each full moon, are ended now. 'Tis this that filleth me with anxious thought whether thou, O king, seated on the sky, thy heavenly throne, carest at all that my city is destroyed, a prey to the furious fiery blast. Ah! my husband, fondly loved, thou art a wandering spectre; unwashed, unburied lies thy corpse, while o'er the sea the ship sped by wings will carry me to Argos, land of steeds, where stand Cyclopian walls of stone upreared to heaven. There in the gate the children gather, hanging round their mothers' necks, and weep their piteous lamentation, "O mother, woe is me! torn from thy sight Achæans bear me away from thee

[1] Reading with Nauck *αἰσχίονες*.

to their dark ship to row me o'er the deep to sacred Salamis or to the hill[1] on the Isthmus, that o'erlooks two seas, the key to the gates of Pelops. Oh may the blazing thunderbolt, hurled in might from its holy home, smite the barque of Menelaus full amidships as it is crossing the Ægean[2] main, since he is carrying me away in bitter sorrow from the shores of Ilium to be a slave in Hellas, while the daughter of Zeus still keeps her golden mirrors, delight of maidens' hearts. Never may he reach his home in Laconia or his father's hearth and home, nor come to the town of Pitane[3] or the temple of the goddess[4] with the gates of bronze, having taken as his captive her whose marriage brought disgrace on Hellas through its length and breadth and woful anguish on the streams of Simois! Ah me! ah me! new troubles on my country fall, to take the place of those that still are fresh! Behold, ye hapless wives of Troy, the corpse of Astyanax! whom the Danai have cruelly slain by hurling him from the battlements.

[*Enter* TALTHYBIUS *and attendants, bearing the corpse of* ASTYANAX *on* HECTOR'S *shield.*

TAL. Hecuba, one ship alone delays its plashing oars, and it is soon to sail to the shores of Phthia freighted with the remnant of the spoils of Achilles' son: for Neoptolemus is already out at sea, having heard that new calamities have befallen Peleus, for Acastus, son of Pelias, hath banished him the realm. Wherefore he is gone, too quick to indulge in any delay, and with him goes Andromache, who drew many a tear from me what time she started hence, wailing her country and crying her farewell to Hector's tomb. And she

[1] *i.e.* Acrocorinthus, which would overlook the Corinthian and Saronic gulfs; the Isthmus may fairly be called the key to the Peloponnesus.

[2] Hartung, whose reading is here followed, has Αἴγαιον δίπάλτον ἱερὸν, κ.τ.λ.

[3] Part of Sparta was so called.

[4] Athena of "the Brazen House," a temple on the acropolis.

craved her master leave to bury this poor dead child of Hector who breathed his last when from the turrets hurled, entreating too that he would not carry this shield, the terror of the Achæans—this shield with plates of brass wherewith his father would gird himself—to the home of Peleus or to the same bridal bower whither she, herself the mother of this corpse, would be led, a bitter sight to her, but let her bury the child therein instead of in a coffin of cedar or a tomb of stone, and to thy hands commit the corpse that thou mayst deck it with robes and garlands as best thou canst with thy present means; for she is far away and her master's haste prevented her from burying the child herself. So we, when thou the corpse hast decked, will heap the earth above and set[1] thereon a spear; but do thou with thy best speed perform thy allotted task; one toil however have I already spared thee, for I crossed Scamander's stream and bathed the corpse and cleansed its wounds. But now will I go to dig a grave for him, that our united efforts shortening our task may speed our ship towards home. [*Exit* TALTHYBIUS.

HEC. Place the shield upon the ground, Hector's shield so deftly rounded, a piteous sight, a bitter grief for me to see. O ye Achæans, more reason have ye to boast of your prowess than your wisdom! Why have ye in terror of this child been guilty of a murder never matched before? Did ye fear that some day he would rear again the fallen walls of Troy? It seems then ye were nothing after all, when, though Hector's fortunes in the war were prosperous and he had ten thousand other arms to back him, we still were daily overmatched; and yet, now that our city is taken and every Phrygian slain, ye fear a tender babe like this! Out upon his fear! say I, who fears, but never yet hath reasoned out the cause. Ah! my beloved, thine is a piteous death indeed! Hadst thou died for thy city, when thou hadst tasted of the sweets of manhood, of marriage, and of god-

[1] Reading *ἀροῦμεν*, the correction of Elmsley and Matthiae.

like power o'er others, then wert thou blest, if aught herein is blest. But now after one glimpse, one dream thereof thou knowest them no more,[1] my child, and hast no joy of them, though heir to all. Ah, poor babe! how sadly have thy own father's walls, those towers that Loxias reared, shorn from thy head the locks thy mother fondled, and so oft caressed, from which through fractured bones the face of murder grins,—briefly to dismiss my shocking theme. O hands, how sweet the likeness ye retain of his father, and yet ye lie limp in your sockets before me! Dear mouth, so often full of words of pride, death hath closed thee, and thou hast not kept the promise thou didst make, when nestling in my robe, "Ah, mother mine, many a lock of my hair will I cut off for thee, and to thy tomb will lead my troops of friends, taking a fond farewell of thee." But now 'tis not thy hand that buries me, but I, on whom is come old age with loss of home and children, am burying thee, a tender child untimely slain. Ah me! those kisses numberless, the nurture that I gave to thee, those sleepless[2] nights—they all are lost! What shall the bard inscribe upon thy tomb about thee? "Argives once for fear of him slew this child!" Foul shame should that inscription be to Hellas. O child, though thou hast no part in all thy father's wealth, yet shalt thou have his brazen shield wherein to find a tomb. Ah! shield that didst keep safe the comely arm of Hector, now hast thou lost thy valiant keeper! How fair upon thy handle lies his imprint, and on the rim, that circles round the targe, are marks of sweat, that trickled oft from Hector's brow as he pressed it 'gainst his beard in battle's stress. Come, bring forth, from such store as we have, adornment for the hapless dead, for fortune gives no chance now for offerings fair; yet of such as I possess, shalt thou receive these gifts. Foolish mortal

[1] For οὐκ οἶσθ' Hartung emends συνοῖσθ'.

[2] MSS. ὕπνοι, Dobree πόνοι, Hartung κόμποι.

he! who thinks his luck secure and so rejoices; for fortune, like a madman in her moods, springs towards this man, then towards that; and none ever experiences the same unchanging luck.

CHO. Lo! all is ready and they are bringing at thy bidding from the spoils of Troy garniture to put upon the dead.

HEC. Ah! my child, 'tis not as victor o'er thy comrades with horse or bow,—customs Troy esteems, without pursuing them to excess,—that Hector's mother decks thee now with ornaments from the store that once was thine, though now hath Helen, whom the gods abhor, reft thee of thine own, yea, and robbed thee of thy life and caused thy house to perish root and branch.

CHO. Woe! thrice woe! my heart is touched, and thou the cause, my mighty prince in days now passed!

HEC. About thy body now I swathe this Phrygian robe of honour, which should have clad thee on thy marriage-day, wedded to the noblest of Asia's daughters. Thou too, dear shield of Hector, victorious parent of countless triumphs past, accept thy crown, for though thou share the dead child's tomb, death cannot touch thee; for thou dost merit honours far beyond those arms [1] that the crafty knave Odysseus won.

CHO. Alas! ah me! thee, O child, shall earth take to her breast, a cause for bitter weeping. Mourn, thou mother!

HEC. Ah me!

CHO. Wail for the dead.

HEC. Woe is me!

CHO. Alas! for thy unending sorrow!

HEC. Thy wounds in part will I bind up with bandages, a wretched leech in name alone, without reality; but for the rest, thy sire must look to that amongst the dead.

[1] *i.e.* the arms of Achilles, which were set up as a prize, and won by Odysseus from Aias.

CHO. Smite, oh smite upon thy head with frequent blow of hand. Woe is me!

HEC. My kind, good friends!

CHO. Speak out,[1] Hecuba, the word that was on thy lips.

HEC. It seems the only things that heaven concerns itself about are my troubles and Troy hateful in their eyes above all other cities. In vain did we sacrifice to them. Had not[2] the god caught us in his grip and plunged us headlong 'neath the earth, we should have been unheard of, nor ever sung in Muses' songs, furnishing to bards of after-days a subject for their minstrelsy. Go, bury now in his poor tomb the dead, wreathed all duly as befits a corpse. And yet I deem it makes but little difference to the dead, although they get a gorgeous funeral; for this is but a cause of idle pride to the living. [*The corpse is carried off to burial.*

CHO. Alas! for thy unhappy mother, who o'er[3] thy corpse hath closed the high hopes of her life! Born of a noble stock, counted most happy in thy lot, ah! what a tragic death is thine! Ha! who are those I see on yonder pinnacles darting to and fro with flaming torches in their hands? Some new calamity will soon on Troy alight.

[*Soldiers are seen on the battlements of Troy, torch in hand.*

TAL. Ye captains, whose allotted task it is to fire this town of Priam, to you I speak. No longer keep the firebrand idle in your hands, but launch the flame, that when we have destroyed the city of Ilium we may set forth in gladness on our homeward voyage from Troy. And you, ye sons of Troy,—to let my orders take at once a double form -start for the Achæan ships for your departure hence, soon as ever the leaders of the host blow loud and clear upon the

[1] Reading with Musgrave *σάφ' ἔνεπε*, Hermann *ἔαρσήσασ' ἔνεπε*.

[2] Reading *εἰ δὲ μὴ* for the old *εἰ δ' ἡμᾶς*.

[3] MSS. *ἐπὶ*, Porson *ἐν*.

trumpet. And thou, unhappy grey-haired dame, follow; for yonder come servants from Odysseus to fetch thee, for to him thou art assigned by lot to be a slave far from thy country.

HEC. Ah, woe is me! This surely is the last, the utmost limit this, of all my sorrows; forth from my land I go; my city is ablaze with flame. Yet, thou aged foot, make one painful struggle to hasten, that I may say a farewell to this wretched town. O Troy, that erst hadst such a grand career amongst barbarian towns, soon wilt thou be reft of that splendid name. Lo! they are burning thee, and leading us e'en now from our land to slavery. Great gods! Yet why call on the gods? They did not hearken e'en aforetime to our call. Come, let us rush into the flames, for to die with my country in its blazing ruin were a noble death for me.

TAL. Thy sorrows drive thee frantic, poor lady. Go, lead her hence, make no delay, for ye must deliver her into the hand of Odysseus, conveying to him his prize.

HEC. O son of Cronos, prince of Phrygia, father of our race, dost thou behold our sufferings now, unworthy of the stock of Dardanus?

CHO. He sees them, but our mighty city is a city no more, and Troy's day is done.

HEC. Woe! thrice woe upon me! Ilium is ablaze; the homes of Pergamos and its towering walls[1] are now one sheet of flame.

CHO. As the smoke soars on wings to heaven,[2] so sinks our city to the ground before the spear. With furious haste both fire and foeman's spear devour each house.

HEC. Hearken, my children, hear your mother's voice.

CHO. Thou art calling on the dead with voice of lamentation.

[1] Reading *καταίθεται τέρεμνα τ' ἄκρα τε τειχέων*.

[2] Reading with Reiske *οὐρανίᾳ*.

HEC. Yea, as I stretch my aged limbs upon the ground, and beat upon the earth with both my hands.

CHO. I follow thee and kneel, invoking from the nether world my hapless husband.

HEC. I am being dragged and hurried away—

CHO. O the sorrow of that cry!

HEC. From my own dear country, to dwell beneath a master's roof. Woe is me! O Priam, Priam, slain, unburied, left without a friend, naught dost thou know of my cruel fate.

CHO. No, for o'er his eyes black death hath drawn his pall,—a holy man by sinners slain!

HEC. Woe for the temples of the gods! Woe for our dear city!

CHO. Woe!

HEC. Murderous flame and foeman's spear are now your lot.

CHO. Soon will ye tumble to your own loved soil, and be forgotten.

HEC. And the dust, mounting to heaven on wings like smoke, will rob me of the sight of my home.

CHO. The name of my country will pass into obscurity; all is scattered far and wide, and hapless Troy has ceased to be.

HEC. Did ye hear that and know its purport?

CHO. Aye, 'twas the crash of the citadel.

HEC. The shock will whelm our city utterly. O woe is me! trembling, quaking limbs, support my footsteps! away! to face the day that begins thy slavery.

CHO. Woe for our unhappy town! And yet to the Achæan fleet advance.

HEC. Woe for thee, O land that nursed my little babes!

CHO. Ah! woe!

ION.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HERMES.
ION.
CHORUS OF CREUSA'S HANDMAIDENS
CREUSA.
XUTHUS.
OLD MAN SERVANT.
SERVANT OF CREUSA.
PYTHIAN PRIESTESS.
ATHENA.

SCENE.—Before Apollo's temple at Delphi.

ION.

HER. Atlas, who bears upon his brazen back [1] the pressure of the sky, ancient dwelling of the gods, begat Maia from a daughter of one of those gods, and she bare me Hermes to mighty Zeus, to be the servant of the powers divine. Lo! I am come to this land of Delphi where sits Phœbus on the centre of the world and giveth oracles to men, ever chanting lays prophetic of things that are to be. Now there is a city in Hellas of no small note, called after Pallas, goddess of the golden lance; there did Phœbus force his love on Creusa, daughter of Erechtheus, beneath the rock of Pallas, northward of Athens' steep realm, called Macræ by the kings of Attica. And she without her father's knowledge—for such was the god's good pleasure,—bore the burden in her womb unto the end, and when her time came, she brought forth a child in the house and carried him away to the self-same cave wherein the god declared his love to her, and she cradled him in the hollow of a rounded ark and cast him forth to die, observant of the custom of her ancestors and of earth-born Erichthonius, whom the daughter of Zeus gave into the charge of the daughters [2] of Agraulus, after setting on either side, to keep him safe, a guard of serpents twain. Hence in that land [3] among the Erechthidæ 'tis a

[1] To avoid the cretic foot in *νώτοις οὐρανόν*, Nauck proposes *νώτοισιν φέρων* regarding *ἐκτρίβων* as spurious though not yet emended. In the text here an endeavour has been made to translate *ἐκτρίβων*.

[2] *i.e.* the daughters of Cecrops, a mythical king of Attica.

[3] For *ἐκεῖ* Barnes reads *ἔτι*.

custom to protect their babes with charms of golden snakes. But ere she left the babe to die, the young mother tied about him her own broidered robe. And this is the request that Phœbus craves of me, for he is my brother, "Go, brother, to those children of the soil that dwell in glorious Athens, for well thou knowest Athena's city, and take a new-born babe from out the hollow rock, his cradle and his swaddling-clothes as well, and bear him to my prophetic shrine at Delphi, and set him at the entering-in of my temple. What else remains shall be my care, for that child is mine, that thou mayst know it." So I, to do my brother Loxias a service, took up the woven ark and bore it off, and at the threshold of the shrine I have laid the babe, after opening the lid of the wicker cradle that the child might be seen. But just as the sun-god was starting forth to run his course, a priestess chanced to enter the god's shrine; and when her eyes lit upon the tender babe she thought it strange that any Delphian maid should dare to cast her child of shame down at the temple of the god: wherefore her purpose was to remove him beyond the altar, but from pity she renounced her cruel thought, and the god to help his child did second her pity to save the babe from being cast out. So she took and brought him up, but she knew not that Phœbus was his sire nor of the mother that bare him, nor yet did the child know his parents. While yet he was a child, around the altar that fed him he would ramble at his play, but when he came to man's estate, the Delphians made him treasurer of the god and steward of all his store, and found him true, and so until the present day he leads a holy life in the god's temple. Meantime Creusa, mother of this youth, is wedded to Xuthus; and thus it came to pass; a war broke out 'twixt Athens and the folk of Chalcodon[1] who dwell in the land of Eubœa; and Xuthus took part therein and helped to end it, for which he received the hand of Creusa as his guerdon,

[1] The Eubœans are so called from Chalcodon, a king of Eubœa.

albeit he was no native, but an Achæan, sprung from Æolus, the son of Zeus; and after many years of wedded life he and Creusa still are childless; wherefore they are come to this oracle of Apollo in their desire for offspring. To this end is Loxias guiding their destiny nor hath it escaped his ken, as some suppose. For when Xuthus enters this shrine, the god will give him his own son and declare that Xuthus is the sire, that so the boy may come to his mother's home and be acknowledged by Creusa, while the marriage of Loxias remains a secret and the child obtains his rights; and he shall cause him to be called Ion, founder of a realm in Asia, through all the breadth of Hellas. But now will I get me to yon grotto 'neath the laurel's shade that I may learn what is decreed about the child. For I see the son of Loxias now coming forth to cleanse the gateway in front of the temple with boughs of laurel. I greet him first of all the gods by his name Ion which he soon shall bear.

Ion. Lo! the sun-god is e'en now turning towards the earth his chariot-car resplendent; before[1] yon fire the stars retire to night's mysterious gloom from forth the firmament; the peaks of Parnassus, where no man may set foot, are all ablaze and hail the car of day for mortal's service. To Phœbus' roof mounts up the smoke of myrrh, offering of the desert; there on the holy tripod sits the Delphian priestess, chanting to the ears of Hellas in numbers loud, whate'er Apollo doth proclaim. Ye Delphians, votaries of Phœbus, away! to Castalia's gushing fount as silver clear, and, when ye have bathed you in its waters pure, enter the shrine; and keep your lips in holy silence that it may be well, careful to utter words of good omen amongst yourselves to those who wish to consult the oracle; while I with laurel-sprays and sacred wreaths and drops of water sprinkled o'er the floor will purify the entrance to the shrine of Phœbus, my task each day from childhood's hour; and

[1] Reading with Badham ἄστρα δὲ φεύγει πῦρ τόδ' ἀπ' αἰθέρος.

with my bow will I put to flight the flocks of feathered fowls that harm his sacred offerings; for here in Phœbus' shrine, which nurtured me, I minister, an orphan, fatherless and motherless.

Come, thou tender laurel-shoot, gathered from gardens divine to wait upon the glorious god, thou that sweepest clean the altar of Phœbus hard by his shrine, where holy founts, that ever gush with ceaseless [1] flow, bedew the myrtle's hallowed spray wherewith I cleanse the temple-floor the livelong day, so soon as the swift sun-god wings his flight on high, in my daily ministration. Hail Pæan, prince of healing! blest, ah! doubly blest be thou, child of Latona! Fair the service that I render to thee, Phœbus, before thy house, honouring thy seat of prophecy; a glorious task I count it, to serve not mortal man but deathless gods; wherefore I never weary of performing holy services. Phœbus is to me as the father that begot me, for as such I praise the god that gives me food. 'Tis Phœbus, who dwelleth in the temple, whom I call by that helpful name of father. Hail Pæan, healing god, good luck to thee and blessing, child of Latona! My task is nearly done of sweeping with the laurel broom, so now from a golden ewer will I sprinkle o'er the ground water from Castalia's gushing spring, scattering the liquid dew with hands from all defilement free. Oh may I never cease thus to serve Phœbus, or, if I do, may fortune smile upon me!

Ha! they come, the feathered tribes, leaving their nests on Parnassus. I forbid ye to settle on the coping or enter the gilded dome. Thou herald of Zeus, that masterest the might of other birds with those talons of thine, once more shall my arrow o'ertake thee.

Lo! another comes sailing towards the altar, a swan this

[1] *τὰν ἀίναον*—there is something wanting to the metre, and the text is probably corrupt. Various suggestions for an emendation have been offered, *e.g.*, *γᾶς τὰν* by Hermann, *'ρυτὰν* by Fritzsch, etc.

time; take thy bright plumes elsewhere; the lyre that Phœbus tuneth to thy song shall never save thee from the bow; so fly away, and settle at the Delian mere, for[1] if thou wilt not hearken, thy blood shall choke the utterance of thy fair melody.

Ha! what new bird comes now? Does it mean to lodge a nest of dry straw for its brood beneath the gables? Soon shall my twanging bow drive thee away. Dost not hear me? Away and rear thy young amid the streams of swirling Alpheus, or get thee to the woody Isthmian glen, that Phœbus' offerings and his shrine may take no hurt. I am loth to slay ye, ye messengers to mortal man of messages from heaven; still must I serve Phœbus, to whose tasks I am devoted, nor will I cease to minister to those that give me food.

1ST CHO.[2] It is not in holy Athens only that there are courts of the gods with fine colonnades, and the worship of Apollo, guardian of highways; but here, too, at the shrine of Loxias, son of Latona, shines the lovely eye of day on faces twain.[3]

2ND CHO. Just look at this! here is the son[4] of Zeus killing with his scimitar of gold the watersnake of Lerna. Do look at him, my friend!

1ST CHO. Yes, I see. And close to him stands another with a blazing torch uplifted; who is he? Can this be the warrior Iolaus whose story is told on my broidery, who shares with the son of Zeus his labours and helps him in the moil?

[1] Kirchhoff's ingenious suggestion is *αἰμάξω σ' εἰ μὴ παύσεις, κ.τ.λ.*

[2] Hermann's arrangement is followed, as in Paley's text, in the distribution of lines amongst the several members of the chorus.

[3] It is doubtful what is here intended, statues or pictures. Paley suggests that the sun and moon, symbols of Apollo and Latona, are indicated; or possibly a temple with two fronts covered with frescoes is to be understood.

[4] Heracles.

3RD CHO. Oh! but look at this! a man[1] mounted on a winged horse, killing a fire-breathing monster with three bodies.

1ST CHO. I am turning my eyes in every direction. Behold the rout of the giants carved on these walls of stone.

4TH CHO. Yes, yes, good friends, I am looking.

5TH CHO. Dost see her standing over Enceladus brandishing her shield with the Gorgon's head?

6TH CHO. I see Pallas, my own goddess.

7TH CHO. Again, dost see the massy thunderbolt all aflame in the far-darting hands of Zeus?

8TH CHO. I do; 'tis blasting with its flame Mimas, that deadly foe.

9TH CHO. Bromius too, the god of revelry, is slaying another of the sons of Earth with his thyrsus of ivy, never meant for battle.

1ST CHO. Thou that art stationed by this fane, to thee I do address me, may we pass the threshold of these vaults, with our fair white feet?[2]

ION. Nay, ye must not, stranger ladies.

10TH CHO. May I ask thee about something I have heard?

ION. What wouldst thou ask?

11TH CHO. Is it really true that the temple of Phœbus stands upon the centre of the world?

ION. Aye, there it stands with garlands decked and gorgeous all around.

12TH CHO. E'en so the legend saith.

ION. If ye have offered a sacrificial cake before the shrine and have aught ye wish to ask Phœbus, approach the altar; but enter not the inmost sanctuary, save ye have sacrificed sheep.

[1] Bellerophon and the Chimæra.

[2] After ποῦ something is wanting; Dindorf supplies βαλὸν (=threshold) which had also occurred to Hermann, and is adopted in Nauck's text.

13TH CHO. I understand; but we have no mind to trespass against the god's law; the pictures here without will amuse us.

ION. Feast your eyes on all ye may.

14TH CHO. My mistress gave me leave to see these vaulted chambers.

ION. Whose handmaids do ye avow yourselves?

15TH CHO. The temple, where Pallas dwells, is the nursing-home of my lords. But lo! here is she of whom thou askest.

ION. Lady, whosoe'er thou art, I see thou art of noble birth, and thy bearing proves thy gentle breeding. For from his bearing one may mostly judge whether a man is nobly born. Yet am I much amazed to see thee close thine eyes in grief and with tears bedew thy noble face, when thou standest face to face with the holy oracle of Loxias. Why, lady, art thou thus disquieted? Here, where all others show their joy at sight of Phœbus' sanctuary, thine eye is wet with tears.

CRE. Most courteously, sir stranger, dost thou express surprise at these my tears; the sight of this temple of Apollo recalled to me a memory of long ago, and somehow my thoughts went wandering home,[1] though I am here myself. Ah, hapless race of women! ah, ye reckless gods! What shall I say? to what standard shall we refer justice if through the injustice of our lords and masters we are brought to ruin?

ION. Why, lady, art thou thus cast down, past all finding out?[2]

CRE. 'Tis naught; I have shot my bolt; for what remains, I say no more, nor seek thou further to inquire.

ION. Who art thou and whence? who is the father that begat thee? by what name are we to call thee?

[1] MSS. *οἴκοι*, Nauck *ἐκεῖ*.

[2] MSS. *ἀνερεύνητα*, Nauck *ἀνερμήνευτα*.

CRE. Creusa is my name, the daughter of Erechtheus I; my native land is Athens.

ION. A glorious city thine, lady, a noble line of ancestry! with what reverence I behold thee!

CRE. Thus far, no further goes my luck, good sir.

ION. Pray, is the current legend true——

CRE. What is thy question? I fain would learn.

ION. Was thy father's grandsire really sprung from Earth?

CRE. Yes, Erichthonius was; but my high birth avails me not.

ION. Is it true Athena reared him from the ground?

CRE. Aye, and into maidens' hands, though not his mother's—

ION. Consigned him, did she? as 'tis wont to be set forth in painting.

CRE. Yes, to the daughters of Cecrops, to keep him safe unseen.

ION. I have heard the maidens opened the ark wherein the goddess laid him.

CRE. And so they died, dabbling with their blood the rocky cliff.

ION. Even so. But what of this next story? Is it true or groundless?

CRE. What is thy question? Ask on, I have no calls upon my leisure.

ION. Did thy sire Erechtheus offer thy sisters as a sacrifice?

CRE. For his country's sake he did endure to slay the maids as victims.

ION. And how didst thou, alone of al thy sisters, escape?

CRE. I was still a tender babe in my mother's arms.

ION. Did the earth really open its mouth and swallow thy father?

CRE. The sea-god smote and slew him with his trident.

ION. Is there a spot there called Macræ?

CRE. Why ask that? what memories thou recallest!

ION. Doth the Pythian god with his flashing fire do honour to the place?

CRE. Honour,[1] yes! Honour, indeed! would I had never seen the spot!

ION. How now? dost thou abhor that which the god holds dear?

CRE. No, no; but I and that cave are witnesses of a deed of shame.

ION. Lady, who is the Athenian lord that calls thee wife?

CRE. No citizen of Athens, but a stranger from another land.

ION. Who is he? he must have been one of noble birth.

CRE. Xuthus, son of Æolus, sprung from Zeus.

ION. And how did he, a stranger, win thee a native born?

CRE. Hard by Athens lies a neighbouring township, Eubœa.

ION. With a bounding line of waters in between, so I have heard.

CRE. This did he sack, making common cause with Cecrops' sons.

ION. Coming as an ally, maybe; he won thy hand for this?

CRE. Yes, this was his dower of battle, the prize of his prowess.

ION. Art thou come to the oracle alone, or with thy lord?

CRE. With him. But he is now visiting the cavern of Trophonius.

[1] Reading τιμᾷ. τί τιμᾷ; but Bothe's τιμᾷ γ' ἀτιμ'· ὡς which is adopted in Nauck's text, is a tempting emendation.

Ion. As a spectator merely, or to consult the oracle?

Cre. 'Tis his wish to hear the self-same answer from Trophonius and Phœbus too.

Ion. Is it to seek earth's produce or fruit of offspring that ye come?

Cre. We are childless, though wedded these many years.

Ion. Hast thou never been a mother? art thou wholly childless?

Cre. Phœbus knows whether I am childless.

Ion. Unhappy wife! how this doth mar thy fortune else so happy!

Cre. But who art thou? how blest I count thy mother!

Ion. Lady, I am called the servant of Apollo, and so I am.

Cre. An offering of thy city, or sold to him by some master?

Ion. Naught know I but this, that I am called the slave of Loxias.

Cre. Then do I in my turn pity thee, sir stranger.

Ion. Because I know not her that bare me, or him that begat me.

Cre. Is thy home here in the temple, or hast thou a house to dwell in?

Ion. The god's whole temple is my house, wherever sleep o'ertakes me.

Cre. Was it as a child or young man that thou camest to the temple?

Ion. Those who seem to know the truth, say I was but a babe.

Cre. What Delphian maid, then, weaned thee?

Ion. I never knew a mother's breast. But she who brought me up—

Cre. Who was she, unhappy youth? I see thy sufferings in my own.

ION. The priestess of Phœbus; I look on her as my mother.

CRE. Until thou camest unto man's estate, what nurture hadst thou?

ION. The altar fed me, and the bounty of each casual guest.

CRE. Woe is thy mother, then, whoe'er she was!

ION. Maybe my birth was some poor woman's wrong.

CRE. Hast thou any store, for thy dress is costly enough?

ION. The god I serve gives me these robes to wear.

CRE. Wert thou never eager to inquire into thy birth?

ION. Ah! yes, lady! but I have no clue at all to guide me.

CRE. Alas! I know another woman who hath suffered as thy mother did.

ION. Who is she? If she would but help me in the task, how happy should I be!

CRE. 'Tis she on whose account I have preceded my husband hither.

ION. What are thy wishes? be sure I will serve thee, lady.

CRE. I would fain obtain a secret answer from Apollo's oracle.

ION. Name it, then; the rest will I undertake for thee.

CRE. Hear, then, this story. Yet am I ashamed.

ION. Thus wilt thou accomplish naught, for shame is a goddess slow to act.

CRE. A friend of mine asserts that Phœbus lay with her.

ION. Phœbus with a mortal woman? Stranger lady, say not so.

CRE. Yea, and she bare the god a child without her father's knowledge.

ION. It cannot be; some man did wrong her, and she is ashamed of it.

CRE. This she denies herself; and she hath suffered further woe.

Ion. How so, if she was wedded to a god?

Cre. The babe she bare she did expose.

Ion. Where is the child who was thus cast forth? is he yet alive?

Cre. No man knoweth. That is the very thing I would ask the oracle.

Ion. But if he be no more, how did he perish?

Cre. She supposes that beasts devoured the hapless babe.

Ion. What proof led her to form this opinion?

Cre. She came to the place where she exposed him, but found him no longer there.

Ion. Were any drops of blood upon the path?

Cre. None, she says; and yet she ranged the ground to and fro.

Ion. How long is it since the babe was destroyed?

Cre. Thy age and his would measure out the self-same span, were he alive.

Ion. Hath she given birth to no other child since then?

Cre. The god doth wrong her, and wretched is she in having no child.

Ion. But what if Phœbus privily removed her child, and is rearing it?

Cre. Then is he acting unfairly [1] in keeping to himself alone a joy he ought to share.

Ion. Ah me! this misfortune sounds so like my own.

Cre. Thee too, fair sir, thy poor mother misses, I am sure.

Ion. Oh! call me not back to piteous thoughts I had forgotten.

Cre. I am dumb; proceed with that which touches my inquiry.

Ion. Dost know the one weak point in this thy story?

[1] Paley's explanation is, "though he rejoices in doing justice publicly, (viz. by his oracles,) he does not in his private actions."

CRE. 'Tis all weak in that poor lady's case.

ION. How should the god declare that which he wishes hidden?

CRE. He must, if here upon the tripod he sits for all Hellas to seek to.

ION. He is ashamed of the deed; do not question him.

CRE. Aye, but his victim has her sorrows too.

ION. There is none who will act as thy medium in this. For were Phœbus in his own temple proved a villain, he would justly wreak his vengeance on the man who expounded to thee his oracles; desist then, lady; we must not prophesy against the god's will, for it would be the height[1] of folly in us, were we to try and make the gods against their will declare reluctant truths either by sacrifice of sheep at their altars, or by omens from birds. For those answers we strive to extort from heaven, lady, are goods that bring no blessing on our getting; but what they freely offer, thereby we profit.

CHO. Many are the chances that befall the many tribes of men, and diverse are their forms. But scarce one happy scene canst thou find in all the life of man.

CRE. Ah! Phœbus, here as there, art thou unjust to that absent sufferer, whose cause I now am pleading. Thou didst not preserve thy child, as in duty bound, nor wilt thou, for all thy prophetic skill, answer his mother's questioning, that, if he be no more, a mound may be raised o'er him, or, if he live, he may some day be restored to his mother's eyes. In vain[2] is this the home of oracles if the god prevents me from learning what I wish to ask. But lo! I see my noble lord, Xuthus, nigh at hand, returning

[1] Reading with Badham *εἰς τοὔσχατον γάρ.*

[2] Following Nauck's reading ἄλλως ἑὸν χρῇ. Paley suggests that the old reading ἐᾷν was a copyist's abbreviation for ἐξερευνᾶν, giving as the sense, "if the god will not vouchsafe any information, I must make inquiries for myself."

from the lair of Trophonius; say nothing, sir, to my husband of what I have told thee, lest I incur reproach for troubling about secrets, and the matter take a different turn to that which I sought to give it. For women stand towards men in a difficult position, and the virtuous from being mingled with the wicked amongst us are hated; such is our unhappy destiny.

Xut. First to the god all hail! for he must receive the first-fruits of my salutation, and next all hail to thee, my wife! Has my delay in arriving caused thee alarm?

Cre. By no means; but thou[1] art come at an anxious time. Tell me what response thou bringest from Trophonius, touching our future hopes of mutual offspring.

Xut. He deigned not to forestal the prophecies of Phœbus. This only did he say, that neither thou nor I should return unto our house childless from the shrine.

Cre. Majestic mother of Phœbus, to our journey grant success, and may our previous dealings with thy son now find a better issue!

Xut. It will be so; but who acts as the god's spokesman here?

Ion. I serve outside the shrine, others within, who stand near the tripod, even the noblest of the Delphians chosen by lot, sir stranger.

Xut. 'Tis well; I have attained the utmost of my wishes. I will go within; for I am told that a victim has been slain in public before the temple for strangers, and to-day,—for it is a lucky day,—I would fain receive the god's oracle. Do thou, my wife, take branches of laurel, and seated at the altars pray to the gods that I may carry home from Apollo's shrine an answer that bodeth well for offspring.

Cre. All this shall be. Now, at any rate, if Loxias would retrieve his former sins, e'en though he cannot be my friend

[1] Badham reads *ἀφίγμην*.

entirely, yet will I accept whate'er he deigns to give, because he is a god. [*Exeunt* XUTHUS *and* CREUSA.

ION. Why doth this stranger lady hint dark reproaches against the god unceasingly, either out of affection for her on whose behalf she seeks the oracle, or maybe because she is hiding something needing secrecy? Yet what have I to do with the daughter of Erectheus? She is naught to me. No, I will go to the laver, and from golden ewers sprinkle

Yet must I warn Phœbus of what is hap-
e ravishes a maid and proves unfaithful to
retly begetting a son leaves him to die. O!
so, but as thou art supreme, follow in
or whosoever of mortal men transgresses,
nish. How, then, can it be just that you
ur laws for men, and yourselves incur the
ng them? Now I will put this case, though
pen. Wert thou, wert Poseidon, and Zeus,
en, to make atonement to mankind for every
ve, ye would empty your temples in paying
ur misdeeds. For when ye pursue pleasure
the claims[1] of prudence, ye act unjustly; no
to call men wicked, if we are imitating the
gods, but rather those who give us such
[*Exit* ION.

ee I call, Athena mine, at whose birth-throes
less lent her aid, delivered as thou wert by
Titan Prometheus from the forehead of Zeus. Come, O lady Victory, come to the Pythian shrine, winging thy way from the gilded chambers of Olympus to the city's streets, where Phœbus at his altar on the centre of the world brings his oracles to pass beside the dance-encircled tripod; come, too, thou daughter of Latona, together come, ye virgin goddesses, fair sisters of Phœbus! And be this your prayer, fair maidens, that the ancient house of Erechtheus may obtain

[1] Conington proposes *πέρα* for the MSS. *πάρος*.

by clear oracles the blessing of children, though late it come. For this brings to man a settled source of all-surpassing bliss, even to such as see in their ancestral halls a splendid race of strong young parents blest with offspring,[1] to inherit from their sires their wealth in due succession after other children ; yea, for they are a defence in time of trouble, and add a charm to weal, affording to their fatherland a saving help in battle. Give me before the pomp of wealth or royal marriages the careful nurture of noble children. The childless life I do abhor, and him who thinks it good I blame ; to a happy life amongst my children, blest with moderate wealth, may I hold fast.

Ye haunts of Pan, and rocks hard by the grots of Macræ, where Agraulos' daughters three trip it lightly o'er the green grass-lawns before the shrine of Pallas, to the music of the piper's varied note, what time thou, Pan, art piping in those caves of thine, where a maiden once that had a child by Phœbus, unhappy mother ! exposed her babe, forced issue of her woful wooing, for birds to tear and beasts to rend, a bloody banquet ! Never have I seen it told in woven tale or legend that children born to gods by daughters of earth have any share in bliss.

Ion. Attendant maids, that watch and wait your mistress here at the steps of the temple fragrant with incense, say, hath Xuthus already left the holy tripod and the sanctuary, or doth he still abide within to ask yet further of his childlessness ?

Cho. He is still in the temple, sir, nor hath he passed this threshold yet. But hark ! I hear a footstep at the outlet of the door, and lo ! thou mayst see my master this moment coming out.

Xut. All hail ! my son ; that word suits well as my first greeting to thee.

[1] Musgrave reads *κουροτρόφοι*. The meaning apparently is, houses where two or three generations are represented.

ION. 'Tis well with me; do but restrain thyself, and then both of us will be happy.

XUT. Give me thy hand to grasp, thy body to embrace.

ION. Art thou in thy senses, sir, or hath some spiteful god reft thee of them?

XUT. I am in my senses, for I have found what I hold most dear, and am eager to show my love.

ION. Cease! touch me not, nor tear these garlands of the god!

XUT. I will embrace thee, for I am not seizing what is not my own, but only finding my own that I love full well.

ION. Hands off! or thou shalt feel an arrow pierce thy ribs.

XUT. Why dost thou shun me, now that thou findest in me thy nearest and dearest?

ION. I am not fond of schooling boors[1] and crazy strangers.

XUT. Kill me, burn me, if thou wilt; for, if thou dost, thou wilt be thy father's murderer.

ION. Thou my father, indeed! Oh! is not news like this enough to make me laugh?

XUT. Not so; my tale, as it proceeds, will prove to thee what I assert.

ION. Pray, what hast thou to tell me?

XUT. That I am thy own father, and thou my very child.

ION. Who says so?

XUT. Loxias, who gave thee nurture, though thou wert my son.

ION. Thou art thy own witness.

XUT. Nay, I have learnt the answer of the god.

ION. Thou art mistaken in the dark riddle thou hast heard.

XUT. It seems then I do not hear aright.

ION. What said Phœbus?

XUT. That the man who met me——

ION. When and where?

[1] Nauck reads *φρενῶν ἀμοίρους* for the MSS. *φρενοῦν ἀμούσους*.

XUT. As I came forth from the god's temple——
ION. Well! what should happen to him?
XUT. Should be my own true son.
ION. Thy own true son, or a gift from others?
XUT. A gift, but mine for all that.
ION. Am I the first that thou didst meet?
XUT. I have met no other, my son.
ION. Whence came this piece of luck?
XUT. To both of us alike it causes surprise.
ION. Ah! but who was my mother?
XUT. I cannot tell.
ION. Did not Phœbus tell thee that?
XUT. I was so pleased with this, I did not ask him that.
ION. I must have sprung from mother earth.
XUT. The ground brings forth no children.
ION. How can I be thine?
XUT. I know not; I refer it to the god.
ION. Come, let us try another theme.
XUT. Better hold to this, my son.
ION. Didst thou e'er indulge in illicit amours?
XUT. Yes, in the folly of youth.
ION. Ere thou didst win Erechtheus' daughter?
XUT. Never since.
ION. Could it be, then, thou didst beget me?
XUT. The time coincides therewith.
ION. In that case, how came I hither?
XUT. That puzzles me.
ION. After that long journey too?
XUT. That, too, perplexes me.
ION. Didst thou in days gone by come to the Pythian rock?
XUT. Yes, to join in the mystic rites of Bacchus.
ION. Didst thou lodge with one of the public hosts?
XUT. With one who at Delphi—
ION. Initiated thee? or what is it thou sayest?

XUT. Among the frantic votaries of Bacchus.
ION. Wert thou sober, or in thy cups?
XUT. I had indulged in the pleasures of the wine-cup.
ION. That is just the history of my birth.
XUT. Fate hath discovered thee, my son.
ION. How came I to the temple?
XUT. Maybe the maid exposed thee.
ION. I have escaped the shame of slavish birth.
XUT. Acknowledge then thy father, my son.
ION. It is not right that I should mistrust the god.
XUT. Thou art right there.
ION. What more can I desire—
XUT. Thine eyes now open to the sights they should.
ION. Than from a son of Zeus to spring?
XUT. Which is indeed thy lot.
ION. May I embrace the author of my being?
XUT. Aye, put thy trust in the god.
ION. Hail to thee, father mine.
XUT. With joy that title I accept.
ION. This day—
XUT. Hath made me blest.

ION. Ah, mother dear! shall I ever see thee too? Now more than ever do I long to gaze upon thee, whoe'er thou art. But thou perhaps art dead, and I shall never have the chance.

CHO. We share the good luck of thy house; but still I could have wished my mistress too, and Erechtheus' line, had been blest with children.

XUT. My son, albeit the god hath for thy discovery brought his oracle to a true issue, and united thee to me, while thou, too, hast found what most thou dost desire, till now unconscious of it; still, as touching this anxiety so proper in thee, I feel an equal yearning that thou, my child, mayst find thy mother, and I the wife that bare thee unto me. Maybe we shall discover this, if we leave it to time. But now

leave the courts of the god, and this homeless life [1] of thine, and come to Athens, in accordance with thy father's wishes, for there his happy realm and bounteous wealth await thee; nor shalt thou be taunted with base origin and poverty to boot, because in one of these respects thou something lackest, but thou shalt be renowned alike for birth and wealth. Art silent? why dost fix thy eyes upon the ground? Thou art lost in thought, and by this sudden change from thy former cheerfulness, thou strikest thy father with dismay.

Ion. Things assume a different form according as we see them before us, or far off. I am glad at what has happened, since I have found in thee a father; but hear me on some points which I am now deciding. Athens, I am told,—that glorious city of a native race,—owns no aliens; in which case I shall force my entrance there under a twofold disadvantage, as an alien's son and base-born as I am. Branded with this reproach, while as yet I am unsupported, I shall get the name [2] of a mere nobody, a son of nobodies; and if I win my way to the highest place in the state, and seek to be some one, I shall be hated by those who have no influence, for superiority is galling; while 'mongst men of worth who could show their wisdom, but are silent, and take no interest in politics, I shall incur ridicule and be thought a fool for not keeping quiet in such a fault-finding [3] city. Again, if I win a name amongst the men of mark [4] who are engaged in politics, still more will jealous votes bar my progress; for thus, father, is it ever wont to be: they who have the city's ear, and have already made their mark, are most bitter against all rivals. Again, if I, a stranger, come to a home that knows me not, and to that childless wife who before had

[1] MSS. *ἀλητείαν*, Pierson *λατρείαν*.

[2] Badham supplies the lacuna with *αὐτὸς τὸ*, Scaliger reads the line *τὸ μηδὲν ὢν κάξ οὐδένων κεκλήσομαι*.

[3] Reading *ψόγου* with Musgrave for *φόβου*.

[4] Badham emends *τῶν δ' αὖ σοφῶν*, Matthiae *τῶν δ' ἐν λόγῳ*.

thee as partner in her sorrow, but now will feel the bitterness of having to bear her fortune all alone,—how, I ask, shall I not fairly earn her hatred, when I take my stand beside thee; while she, still childless, sees thy dear pledge with bitter eyes; and then thou have to choose between deserting me and regarding her, or honouring me and utterly confounding thy home? How many a murder, and death by deadly drugs have wives devised for husbands! Besides, I pity that wife of thine, father, with her childless old age beginning; she little deserves to pine[1] in barrenness, a daughter of a noble race. That princely state we fondly praise is pleasant to the eye; but yet in its mansions sorrow lurks; for who is happy, or by fortune blest, that has to live his life in fear of violence[2] with many a sidelong glance? Rather would I live among the common folk, and taste their bliss, than be a tyrant who delights in making evil men his friends, and hates the good, in terror of his life. Perchance thou wilt tell me, "Gold outweighs all these evils, and wealth is sweet." I have no wish to be abused for holding tightly to my pelf, nor yet to have the trouble of it. Be mine a moderate fortune free from annoyance! Now hear the blessings, father, that here were mine; first, leisure, man's chiefest joy, with but moderate trouble; no villain ever drove me from my path, and that is a grievance hard to bear, to make room and give way to sorry knaves. My duty was to pray unto the gods, or with mortal men converse, a minister to their joys, not to their sorrows. And I was ever dismissing one batch of guests, while another took their place, so that I was always welcome from the charm of novelty. That honesty which men must pray for, even against their will, custom and nature did conspire to plant in me in the sight of Phœbus. Now when

[1] This line is bracketed by Nauck as spurious. Also lines 614—617 are regarded with suspicion by some editors.

[2] Reading *βίαν*, the correction of Stephens for *βίον*.

I think on this, I deem that I am better here than there, father. So let me live on here,[1] for 'tis an equal charm to joy in high estate, or in a humble fortune find a pleasure.

Cho. Well said! if only those I love find their happiness in thy statement of the case.

Xut. Cease such idle talk, and learn to be happy; for on that spot where I discovered thee, my son, will I begin the rites, since I have chanced on the general banquet, open to all comers, and I will offer thy birth sacrifice which aforetime I left undone. And now will I bring thee to the banquet as my guest and rejoice thy heart, and take thee to the Athenian land as a visitor forsooth, not as my own son. For I will not grieve my wife in her childless sorrow by my good fortune. But in time will I seize a happy moment and prevail on her to let thee wield my sceptre o'er the realm. Thy name shall be Ion, in accordance with what happened, for that thou wert the first to cross my path as I came forth from Apollo's sanctuary. Go, gather every friend thou hast, and with them make merry o'er the flesh of sacrifice, on the eve of thy departure from the town of Delphi. On you, ye handmaids, silence I enjoin, for, if ye say one word to my wife, death awaits you.

[*Exit* Xuthus.

Ion. Well, I will go; one thing my fortune lacks, for if I find not her that gave me birth, life is no life to me, my father; and, if I may make the prayer, Oh may that mother be a daughter of Athens! that from her I may inherit freedom of speech. For if a stranger settle in a city free from aliens, e'en though in name[2] he be a citizen, yet doth he find himself tongue-tied and debarred from open utterance.

[*Exit* Ion.

Cho. Weeping and lamentation[3] and the beginning of

[1] Reading with Badham ἔα δ' ἔμ' αὐτοῦ for MSS. ἐμαυτῷ.

[2] Conington *νόμοισιν*.

[3] Reading the emendation of Hermann, ἀλαλαγάς, which Nauck

mourning I foresee, when my mistress shall see her lord blest with a son, while she is childless and forlorn. What was this oracle thou didst vouchsafe, prophetic son of Latona? Whence came this boy, thy foster-child who lingers in thy temple? who was his mother? I like not thy oracle; I fear there is some treachery. In terror I await the issue of this chance; for strange are these tidings [1] and strange it is that the god declares them to me. There is guile connected with this waif's fortune.[2] All must allow that. Shall we, good friends, throw off disguise and tell our mistress this story about her husband in whom her all was centred and whose hopes, poor lady, she once shared? But now in misery is she plunged, while he enjoys the smiles of fortune; to hoary eld she drifteth fast, while he, her lord, pays no regard to his loved ones,—the wretch, who came an alien to her house to share great wealth and failed to guard her fortunes! Perdition catch this traitor to my lady! never may he succeed in offering to the gods upon their blazing altar a hallowed cake with flames that augur well! He shall know to his cost my regard for my mistress.[3] Now are sire and new-found son bent on the approaching feast. Ho! ye peaks of Parnassus that rear your rocky heads to heaven, where Bacchus with uplifted torch of blazing pine bounds nimbly amid his bacchanals, that range by night! Never to my city come this boy! let him die and leave his young life as it dawns! For should our city fall on evil days, this bringing-in of strangers would supply it with a reason. Enough, enough for us Erechtheus' line that erst held sway!

adopts, with *τ'* after *στεναγμάτων*; the words *ἄλλας γε* are generally agreed to be corrupt.

[1] Reading with Nauck *τάδε θεοῦ φήμα* for MSS. *τῳδί ποτ' εὔφημα.*

[2] Reading *ἔχει δόλον τύχαν θ' ὁ παῖς*, for which Nauck has *ἔχει δόμων τύχαν.*

[3] To supply the lacuna is perhaps impossible, but the sense is clear.

CRE. Aged retainer of my father Erechtheus while yet he lived and saw the light of day, mount to the god's prophetic shrine that thou mayst share my gladness, if haply Loxias, great king, vouchsafe an answer touching my hopes of offspring; for sweet it is to share with friends prosperity, and sweet likewise to see a friendly face if any ill betide,—which God forbid! As thou of yore didst tend my sire, so now, thy mistress though I am, I take his place in tending thee.

OLD SER. Daughter, thy manners bear good witness still to thy noble lineage; thou hast never brought shame upon those ancestors of thine,[1] the children of the soil. A hand, I prithee, to the shrine! a hand to lean upon! 'Tis a steep path thither, truly; but lend thy aid to guide my steps and make me young again.

CRE. Come follow then, and look where thou art treading.

OLD SER. Behold! though my steps loiter, my thoughts take wings.

CRE. Lean on thy staff as thou climbest this winding path.

OLD SER. Even this staff is a blind guide when I myself can scarcely see.

CRE. True, but do not yield through fatigue.

OLD SER. Never willingly, but I am not master of that which is mine no more.[2]

CRE. Maidens mine, my trusty servants at the loom and web, declare to me how my lord hath fared as touching the question of offspring which brought us hither: for if ye give me good news, ye will cause joy to a mistress who will not prove faithless to her word.

CHO. O fortune!

OLD SER. This prelude to your speech is unlucky.

CHO. Woe is me!

OLD SER. Can it be that the oracles delivered to my master wound me at all?

[1] Bothe reads τοὺς σοὺς παλαιοὺς ἐκ γένους. [2] *i.e.* strength.

CHO. Enough! why have aught to do with that which brings down death?

CRE. What means this piteous strain? wherefore this alarm?

CHO. Are we to speak or keep silence? What shall we do?

CRE. Speak; for thou hast somewhat to tell that touches me.

CHO. Then speak I will, though twice to die were mine. O mistress mine! never shalt thou hold a babe within thy arms or clasp him to thy breast.

CRE. Ah me! would I were dead!

OLD SER. My daughter!

CRE. O woe is me for my calamity! Mine is a heritage of suffering and woe that poisons life, good friends.

OLD SER. Ah, my child, 'tis death to us!

CRE. Ah me! ah me! grief drives its weapon through this heart of mine.

OLD SER. Stay thy lamentations.

CRE. Nay, but sorrow lodges here.

OLD SER. Till we learn—

CRE. Ah, what further news is there for me?

OLD SER. Whether our master is in the same plight and shares thy misfortune, or thou art alone in thy misery.

CHO. On him, old sir, Loxias hath bestowed a son, and he is enjoying his good fortune apart from her.

CRE. Herein hast thou declared a further evil crowning all, a grief for me to mourn.

OLD SER. The child of whom thou speakest—is he some woman's destined babe, or did the god declare the fate of one already born?

CHO. A youth already born and grown to man's estate doth Phœbus give to him; for I was there myself.

CRE. What sayest thou? nor tongue nor lip should speak the word thou tellest me.

Old Ser. And me. But declare more clearly how this oracle is finding its fulfilment, and say who is the child.

Cho. Whomso thy husband first should meet as he issued from the shrine, him the god gave him for his son.

Cre. Ah me! my fate, it seems, has doomed me to a childless life, and all forlorn am I to dwell in my halls, without an heir.

Old Ser. To whom did the oracle refer? whom did our poor lady's husband meet? how and where did he see him?

Cho. Dear mistress mine, dost know that youth that was sweeping yonder shrine? He is that son.

Cre. Oh! for wings to cleave the liquid air beyond the land of Hellas, away to the western stars, so keen the anguish of my soul, my friends!

Old Ser. Dost know the name his father gave to him, or is that left as yet unsettled[1] and unsaid?

Cho. He called him Ion, because he was the first to cross his path.

Old Ser. Who is his mother?

Cho. That I cannot say. But,—to tell thee all I know, old sir,—her lord is gone, with furtive step, into the hallowed tent, there to offer on this child's behalf such gifts and victims as are offered for a birth, and with his new-found son to celebrate the feast.

Old Ser. Mistress mine, we are betrayed by thy husband, fellow-sufferers thou and I; 'tis a deep-laid plot to outrage us and drive us from Erechtheus' halls. And this I say not from any hatred of thy lord but because I bear thee more love than him: for he, after coming as a stranger to thy city and thy home, and wedding thee, and of thy heritage taking full possession, has been detected in a secret marriage with another woman, by whom he hath children. His secret will I now disclose; when he found thee barren, he was not content to share with thee thy hard

[1] Nauck reads *ἀκήρυκτον* for MSS. *ἀκύρωτον*.

lot, but took to himself a slave to be his stealthy paramour and thus begat a son, whom he sent abroad, giving him to some Delphian maid to nurse; and, to escape detection, the child was dedicated to the god and reared in his temple. But when he heard his boy was grown to manhood, he persuaded thee to come hither to inquire about thy childless state. And after this, 'twas not the god that lied, but thy husband, who long had been rearing the child, and he it was that wove this tissue of falsehood, intending, if he were detected, to refer it to the god, whereas if he escaped exposure,[1] to repel all odium,[2] he meant to vest the sovereignty in this son of his. Likewise he devised anew his name, coined to suit the circumstances, Ion, because, as he asserts, he met him on his way.

Cho. Ah! how I ever hate the wicked who plot unrighteousness and then cunningly trick it out. Far rather would I have a virtuous friend of no great intellect than a knave of subtler wit.

Old Ser. Of all thy wretched fate this will be the crowning sorrow, the bringing to thy house to be its lord some slave-girl's child, whose mother is unknown, himself of no account. For this evil had been to itself confined, had he persuaded thee, pleading thy childlessness, to let him establish in the house some high-born mother's son; or if this had displeased thee, he ought to have sought a daughter of Æolus in marriage. Wherefore must thou now put thy woman's wit to work; either take the dagger, or by guile or

[1] Reading with Nauck λαθὼν for the MSS. ἐλθὼν. This was Musgrave's proposal. Paley reading ἐλθών suggests as a possible interpretation "having returned to Athens, and wishing to take advantage of the time;" but neither this nor any of the other numerous interpretations are satisfactory.

[2] Seidler's reading τὸν φθόνον for τὸν χρόνον, though not very probable in itself, gives an intelligible meaning, and its adoption may perhaps be condoned in a passage which Badham gives up in despair (cf. Paley's note).

poison slay thy husband and his son, ere they deal out death to thee; since if thou spare[1] him, thou wilt lose thy own life; for when two foes meet beneath one roof, one or the other must rue it. Myself too am ready to share this labour with thee, and to help destroy the child when I have made my way into[2] the chamber where he is furnishing the feast, and so repaying my masters for my maintenance I am willing either to die or still behold the light of life. 'Tis but a single thing that brands the slave with shame—his name; in all else no upright slave is a whit worse than free-born men.

Cho. I too, beloved mistress, am ready to share thy fate, be it death or victory.

Cre. Ah! my suffering soul! how am I to keep silence? Am I to disclose the secrets of my love and lose all claim to modesty? What is there to keep me back any longer? With whom have I to pit myself in virtue's lists? Hath not my husband proved untrue? Home and children, both are torn from me; all hope is dead; I have not realized my wish to set the matter straight, by hushing up my former union and saying naught about my son of sorrow. No! by the starry seat of Zeus, by her whose home is on my rocks, and by the hallowed strand of Triton's mere with brimming flood, I will no more conceal my love; for if I can lift that burden from my breast I shall rest easier. With tears my eyes are streaming and my heart is wrung with anguish for the treacherous counsels both of men and gods,—traitors they! as I will show, ungrateful traitors to their loves!

O! thou who dost awake that tuneful lyre with seven strings till to its sweet note of music the lifeless pegs of wild ox-horn resound again, thou child of Latona, to yon

[1] Reading σὺ φεισει, Badham's correction for γ' ἐφήσεις. Dindorf condemns line 847, Nauck both this and the two following lines.

[2] Wakefield ὑπεισελθών.

bright orb of thine will I publish thy reproach. Yes, I saw thee come, the glint of gold upon thy locks, as I was gathering in my folded robe the saffron blooms that blazed like flowers of gold; and by my lily wrist didst thou catch me and ledst me to the cavern's bed, what time I cried aloud upon my mother's name,—thou a god to mate with me in shameless wise to pleasure lady Cypris! Then to my sorrow I bore thee a son, whom, though anguish thrilled my mother's[1] breast, I cast upon that bed of thine, where thou didst join in woful wedlock this unhappy maid. Ah! woe is me! that poor babe I bare thee is now no more; winged fowls have torn and devoured him, but thou art gaily carolling unto thy lyre some song of joy. Hark! thou son of Latona, to thee I call, for that thou dispensest warnings; there at thy golden throne on earth's centre planted will I proclaim a word into thy ear. O! thou wicked bridegroom who art bringing to my husband's house an heir, though from him thou hast received no boon; while that child of thine and mine hath died unrecognized, a prey to carrion birds, his mother's swaddling-clothes all lost. Delos hates thee now, thy bay-tree loves thee not, whose branches sprout beside the tufted palm, where in holy throes Latona, big with child by Zeus, gave birth to thee.

Cho. Ah me! what store of sorrows is here disclosed, enough to draw a tear from every eye!

Old Ser. Daughter, with pity[2] am I filled as a gaze upon thy face; my reason leaves me; for just as I am striving to lighten my spirit of its sea of troubles, comes another wave astern and catches me by reason of thy words; for no sooner hadst thou uttered this tale of present troubles than thou didst turn aside into a fresh[3] track of other woes. What is it thou sayest? What charge against Apollo dost thou

[1] Wecklein φρίκᾳ πατρὸς = "in fearful dread of my father."
[2] Reading οἴκτου with Nauck.
[3] Adopting Musgrave's conjecture καινάς.

bring? What child is this thou dost assert that thou didst bear? Where was it in the city that thou didst expose him, for beasts to rejoice o'er his burial? Tell me once again.

CRE. Old friend, although to meet thine eye, I am ashamed, yet will I tell thee.

OLD SER. Full well I know how to lend my friends a generous sympathy.

CRE. Then hearken; dost know a cave toward the north of Cecrops' rock, that we call Macræ?[1]

OLD SER. I know it; there is the shrine of Pan, and his altar hard by.

CRE. That was the scene of my dire conflict.

OLD SER. What conflict? see how my tears start forth to meet thy words.

CRE. Phœbus forced me to a woful marriage.

OLD SER. Was it then this, my daughter, that I noticed myself?

CRE. I know not; but I will tell thee if thou speak the truth.

OLD SER. At the time thou wert mourning in secret some hidden complaint?

CRE. Yes, 'twas then this trouble happened, which now I am declaring to thee.

OLD SER. How then didst conceal thy union with Apollo?

CRE. I bore a child; hear me patiently, old friend.

OLD SER. Where? and who helped thy travail? or didst thou labour all alone?

CRE. All alone, in the cave where I became a wife.

OLD SER. Where is the child? that thou mayst cease thy childless state.

CRE. Dead, old friend, to beasts exposed.

OLD SER. Dead? did Apollo, evil god, no help afford?

CRE. None; my boy is in the halls of Hades.

[1] Badham, whom Nauck follows, condemns this line as interrupting the *στιχομυθία*.

OLD SER. Who then exposed him? surely not thyself.

CRE. Myself, when 'neath the gloom of night I had wrapped him in my robe.

OLD SER. Did no one share thy secret of the babe's exposure?

CRE. Ill-fortune and secrecy alone.

OLD SER. How couldst thou in the cavern leave thy babe?

CRE. Ah! how? but still I did, with many a word of pity uttered o'er him.

OLD SER. Oh for thy hard heart! Oh for the god's, more hard than thine!

CRE. Hadst thou but seen the babe stretch forth his hands to me!

OLD SER. To find thy mother's breast, to nestle in thy arms?

CRE. By being kept therefrom he suffered grievous wrong from me.

OLD SER. How camest thou to think of casting forth thy babe?

CRE. Methought the god would save his own begotten child.

OLD SER. Ah me! what storms assail thy family's prosperity!

CRE. Why weepest thou, old man, with head close-veiled?

OLD SER. To see the sorrows of thy sire and thee.

CRE. Such is our mortal life; naught abideth in one stay.

OLD SER. Daughter, let us cease to dwell on themes of woe.

CRE. What must I do? Misfortune leaves us helpless.

OLD SER. Avenge thee on the god who first did injure thee.

CRE. How can I, weak mortal as I am, outrun those mightier powers?

OLD SER. Set fire to Apollo's awful sanctuary.

CRE. I am afraid; my present sorrows are enough for me.

OLD SER. Then what thou canst, that dare—thy husband's death.

CRE. Nay, I do respect his former love in the days when he was good and true.

OLD SER. At least, then, slay the boy who hath appeared to supplant thee.

CRE. How can I? would it were possible! how I wish it were!

OLD SER. Arm thy followers with daggers.

CRE. I will about it; but where is the deed to be done?

OLD SER. In the sacred tent, where he is feasting his friends.

CRE. The murder will be too public, and slaves are poor support.

OLD SER. Ah! thou art turning coward. Devise some scheme thyself.

CRE. Well, I too have subtle plans that cannot fail.

OLD SER. If both conditions they fulfil, I will assist thee.

CRE. Hearken then; knowest thou the battle of the earth-born men?

OLD SER. Surely; the fight at Phlegra waged by giants against the gods.

CRE. There Earth brought Gorgon forth, dreadful prodigy.

OLD SER. To aid her sons maybe, and cause the gods hard toil?

CRE. Yea, and Pallas, daughter of Zeus, slew the monster.

OLD SER. What savage form had it assumed?

CRE. A breast-plate of vipers fenced its body.

OLD SER. Is this the tale I heard in days of yore?

CRE. That Athena wears its skin upon her corslet.

OLD SER. Is it this that Pallas wears, called by men her ægis?

CRE. This was the name it received, that day she came to do battle for the gods.

OLD SER. How, daughter, can this harm thy enemies?

CRE. Hast heard of Erichthonius, or no? of course thou hast.

OLD SER. Him whom Earth produced, the founder of thy race?

CRE. To him whilst yet a babe did Pallas give—

OLD SER. Ha! what? thou hast something yet to add.

CRE. Two drops of Gorgon's blood.

OLD SER. What power could they exert [1] on the nature of a human creature?

CRE. The one with death is fraught, the other cures disease.

OLD SER. What held them when she tied them to the child's body?

CRE. With links of gold she fastened them; this to my sire did Erichthonius give.

OLD SER. And at his death it came to thee?

CRE. Yea, and here at my wrist I wear it.

OLD SER. How works the spell of this double gift of Pallas?

CRE. Each drop of gore which trickled from the hollow vein—

OLD SER. What purpose does it serve? what virtue does it carry?

CRE. Wards off disease, and nourishes man's life.

OLD SER. What doth that second drop effect, of which thou madest mention?

CRE. It kills, for it is venom from the Gorgon's snakes.

OLD SER. Dost thou carry this charm mixed in one phial, or separate?

CRE. Separate; for good is no companion for evil.

[1] Nauck ἔχυντας.

OLD SER. Daughter dear, thou art fully armed with all thou needest.

CRE. By this must the boy die, and thou must do the deadly deed.

OLD SER. How and where? thine it is to speak, and mine to dare and do.

CRE. In Athens, when to my house he comes.

OLD SER. That is not wisely said; I may object to thy plan as thou to mine.

CRE. How so? Hast thou the same mistrust that I experience?

OLD SER. Thou wilt get the credit of his death, although thou slay him not.

CRE. True; men say stepdames are jealous of their husband's children.

OLD SER. Kill him here then, that so thou mayst deny the murder.

CRE. Well, thus I do anticipate the pleasure.

OLD SER. Yea, and thou wilt from thy husband keep the very secret he would keep from thee.

CRE. Dost know then what to do? Take from my arm this golden bracelet, Athena's gift, some ancient craftsman's work, and seek the spot where my lord is offering secret sacrifice; then when their feasting is o'er and they are about to pour drink-offering to the gods, take this phial in thy robe and pour it into the young man's goblet; [not for all, but for him alone, providing a separate draught,][1] who thinks to lord it o'er my house. And if once it pass his lips, never shall he come to glorious Athens, but here abide, of life bereft.

OLD SER. Go thou within the house of our public hosts; I the while will set about my appointed task. On! aged foot, grow young again in action, for all that time saith no to thee. Go, aid thy mistress against her enemy, help slay

[1] Paley condemns this line.

and drag him from her house. 'Tis well to honour piety in the hour of fortune, but when thou wouldst harm thy foe, no law doth block thy path.

Cho. Daughter[1] of Demeter, goddess of highways, queen as thou art of haunting powers of darkness, oh! guide as well the hand that fills by day a cup of death, against those to whom my revered mistress is sending a philtre of the gore that dripped from hellish Gorgon's severed head, yea, 'gainst him who would obtrude upon the halls of the Erechthidæ. Never may alien, from alien stock, lord it o'er my city, no! none save noble Erechtheus' sons! For if this deadly deed and my lady's aims pass unfulfilled, and the right moment for her daring go by, and with it the hope which now sustains her, either will she seize the whetted knife or fasten the noose about her neck, and by ending one sorrow by another will go down to other phases of existence. For never will that daughter of a noble line, while life is hers, endure within the sunshine of her eyes the sight of alien rulers in her halls. I blush for that god of song, if this stranger is to witness the torch-dance,[2] that heralds in the twentieth dawn, around Callichorus' fair springs, a sleepless votary in midnight revels, what time the star-lit firmament of Zeus, the moon, and Nereus' fifty daughters, that trip it lightly o'er the sea and the eternal rivers' tides, join the dance in honour of the maiden[3] with the crown of gold and her majestic mother; where this vagabond, by Phœbus favoured, thinks to reign, entering into other men's hard toil.[4] Look to it, all ye bards, who, in malicious strains, expose our amours and unholy bonds of lawless love; see how far our virtue surpasses man's dis-

[1] *i.e.* Hecate.

[2] Bacchus was escorted with a solemn torch procession from Athens to Eleusis on the 20th day of the month Boedromion.

[3] Persephone or Cora, and Demeter.

[4] Nauck reads *δόμον* for *πόνον*.

loyalty. Change the burden of your song and keep your spiteful verse to brand man's faithlessness. For this scion of the stock of Zeus shows himself a heedless wight, denying to the mistress of his halls the lot of mutual offspring, and, paying all his court to some strange love, hath gotten him a bastard son.

SER. Ladies of another land, where may I find your mistress, daughter of Erechtheus? For I have searched each nook and corner of this town, and cannot find her.

CHO. What news, my fellow-thrall? why that hurried gait? what tidings bringest thou?

SER. I am pursued; the rulers of this land are seeking her to stone her to death.

CHO. Alas, what is thy tale? say not we are detected in our secret plot for murdering the boy?

SER. Thou hast guessed aright; nor wilt thou be the last to share the trouble.

CHO. How was the hidden scheme laid bare?

SER. The god found means to master wrong with right, unwilling to see his shrine polluted.

CHO. How so? I do conjure thee, tell us all. For if to die or yet to live be ours, 'twere sweeter so, when we know all.

SER. Soon as Xuthus, husband of Creusa, had left the god's prophetic shrine, taking with him his new-found son, to hold the feast and sacrifice that he designed to offer to the gods, himself departed to the place where leaps the Bacchic flame, with blood of sacrifice to dew the double peaks of Dionysus for the son now offered to his gaze, and thus he spake, "My son, abide thou here, and raise a spacious tent by craftsmen's toiling skill; and if I remain long time away after I have sacrificed to the gods of thy birth, let the feast be spread for all friends present." Therewith he took the heifers and went his way. Meantime his stripling son in solemn form set up with upright stays the tent, inclosed but not

with walls, taking good heed to guard it 'gainst the blazing midday sun, nor less against his westering beams, the limit of his course; an oblong space of five score feet he meted out [so that it contained ten thousand feet within that measure's square, as science phrases it],[1] intending to invite all Delphi to the feast. Then from the temple-treasury tapestry he took and therewith made a shelter, wondrous sight to see. First o'er the roof-tree he threw a canopy of robes, an offering Heracles, the son of Zeus, had brought unto the god from his Amazonian spoils. On them was broidered many a pictured scene, to wit, Heaven marshalling his host of stars upon the vaulted sky; there was the sun-god urging on his steeds toward his fiery goal, the bright star of evening at his heels. Night too in sable robes went hurrying by, drawn by a single pair, and the stars did bear her company. Across the zenith a Pleiad sailed, and Orion too with falchion dight was there; above was the bear making his tail to turn upon the golden pole. Up shot the moon's full face, that parts the months in twain; there too the Hyades showed their unerring light to mariners; and Dawn, that brings the morning back, was chasing the stars before her. Next on the sides he hung yet other tapestry; barbarian ships bearing down on the fleet of Hellas; and monsters half-man, half-beast; the capture of the Thracian steeds; the hunting of savage stags and lions fierce; while at the entry Cecrops close to his daughters was wreathing his coils, an offering of some Athenian votary; and in the midst of the banquet-hall he set goblets of gold, while a herald hasted and invited to the feast all citizens who would come. Then, when the tent was full, they decked themselves with garlands and took their fill of the rich viands. Anon after they had put from them the pleasure of eating[2] came an old

[1] Lines 1138-9 are, as Paley shows at some length, almost undoubtedly the insertion of a clumsy copyist.

[2] Reiske supplies the lacuna with δαιτός, a simple emendation. Paley suggests εὐθύς.

man and stood in the midst, where his officious zeal provoked loud laughter among the guests; for he would draw from the drinking-pitchers water to wash the hands withal and was wasting as incense the liquid myrrh, and in his charge he took the golden beakers, setting himself unasked to this office. Now when they were come to the time for the flute-players and the general libation, cried out that aged servitor, "Hence with these tiny cups! bring larger goblets, that our guests may find a quicker route to joyousness." Thereon came servants bending 'neath the weight of goblets chased with silver and golden chalices; and that old man, as if to do his youthful lord a special service, chose out and offered to him a brimming bumper, when he had cast into the wine that potent philtre which, men say, his mistress gave to him to end the young man's days on earth; and no man knew of this; but just as he so lately found held in his hand the drink-offering, the others following suit, some servant there uttered a word of evil import; whereat the stripling, as one who had been reared within the shrine amid reputed seers, deemed this an omen and bade them fill a fresh goblet, but that first drink-offering to the god he poured upon the ground and bade all others do the like. And silence stole upon them; while we with water and Phœnician [1] wine were filling high the sacred bowls. While thus we were busied, comes a flight of doves and settles in the tent, for these dwell fearlessly in the courts of Loxias. Soon as the guests had poured away the luscious juice, those thirsty birds did dip their beaks therein, drawing it up into their feathered throats. Now all the rest received no hurt from the god's libation, but one that settled on the spot where the son newfound had poured his wine, no sooner had tasted thereof,

[1] There is some doubt as to the word Βυβλινον. Paley on Blomfield's authority, speaks of "Thracian" wine; others say it is called after Byblos in Syria, which was famous for its wine. L. and S. write the word Βυβλινον from Biblis a hill in Thrace; so too Nauck.

than convulsions seized her feathered form and she went mad, and screaming aloud uttered strange unwonted cries; and all the feasters gathered there marvelled to see the bird's cruel agony, for she lay writhing in the toils of death, and her red claws relaxed their hold.

Forthwith the son, vouchsafed by oracles, bared his arm by casting off his cloak and stretched it out across the board crying "Who was it strove to slay me? Proclaim it, old sirrah, for thine was the officious zeal and thine the hand from which I took the cup." With that he caught the grey-beard by the arm and set to searching him that he might take the old man red-handed in the act. So was he detected, and under strong constraint declared Creusa's daring deed and all the trick of the poisoned draught. Forth rushed the young man, whom the oracle of Loxias to his sire assigned, taking with him the banqueters, and standing mid the Delphic nobles made harangue, "O! hallowed soil, a stranger woman, daughter of Erechtheus, seeks to poison me." And the lords of Delphi decreed by general vote that my mistress should be hurled from the rock to die, because she strove to slay the priest and compass his death in the temple. So now is the whole city seeking her, who hath to her sorrow sped a hapless journey; for, coming to crave the boon of offspring from Phœbus, she hath lost her life and children too.

Cho. Ah me! I see no way at all to turn death's hand aside; all, all, ere this, is brought to light owing to that fatal draught of the wine-god's juice mixed for death with drops of viper's gore, quick to slay; detected is our offering to the dead; for me my life must end in woe, while death by stoning waits my mistress. How can I escape? Shall I take wings and fly away, or creep beneath the darksome caverns of the earth, striving to shun the doom of death by stoning? or shall I mount the car drawn by swiftest steeds, or embark upon a ship? No man may hide his guilt, save when some god of his own will steals him away. Ah! my

poor mistress! what suffering now awaits thy soul? Must then our wish to work another harm end in our own discomfiture, as justice doth decree?

CRE. My trusty maids, the men of death are on my track; the vote of Delphi goes against me; they give me up to die.

CHO. Unhappy one! we know thy sad mischance, how thou art placed.

CRE. Oh! whither can I fly? for scarce had I the start of my pursuers from the house in my race for life; 'tis by stealth alone that I have thus far escaped my foes.

CHO. Where shouldst thou fly except to the altar?

CRE. What good is that to me?

CHO. To slay a suppliant is forbidden.

CRE. Aye, but the law has given me over to death.

CHO. Only if thou fall into their hands.

CRE. Look! here they come, cruel champions of vengeance, eagerly brandishing their swords.

CHO. Sit thee down upon the altar of burnt-offering! for if thou art slain there, thou wilt fix upon thy murderers the stain of bloodguiltiness: but we must bear our fortune.

ION. O father Cephissus, with the bull-shaped head, what a viper is this thy child, or dragon with fiery eyes that dart a murderous gleam, in whose heart is throned incarnate daring, noxious as those Gorgon drops of venom wherewith she sought to compass my death. Seize her, that the peaks of Parnassus may card the flowing tresses of her hair, for thence shall she be hurled headlong amid the rocks. My lucky star hath kept me from going to Athens, there to fall beneath the power of a step-mother. For I have gauged thy feelings towards me—the full extent of thy bitter hostility—whilst yet amongst my friends;[1] for hadst thou once shut me

[1] Nauck regards ἐν συμμάχοις as spurious, and proposes ἐν συμφόρᾳ. Paley translates "for among those who have befriended me I reckon your feelings, so far as you were a bane to me," etc., apparently meaning "the outward expression of your hostility here has really been

up within thy house, my road to Hades' halls had led direct from thence. This altar shall not save thee, nor yet Apollo's courts, for that pity thou implorest cries out more loudly for me and my mother, who, though absent in the flesh, is never in name far from me. Behold this cursed woman, see the web of trickery she hath woven! yet comes she cowering to Apollo's altar, thinking to escape the punishment of her misdeeds.

CRE. I warn thee not to slay me, both in my own name and in his at whose altar I am stationed.

ION. What hast thou to do with Phœbus?

CRE. This body I devote unto that god to keep.

ION. And yet thou wert for poisoning his minister?

CRE. But thou wert not Apollo's any longer, but thy father's.

ION. Nay, I was his son, that is, in absence of a real father.

CRE. Thou wert so then; now 'tis I, not thou, who am Apollo's.

ION. Well, thou art not guiltless now, whereas I was then.

CRE. I sought to slay thee as an enemy to my house.

ION. And yet I never invaded thy country, sword in hand.

CRE. Thou didst; and thou it was that wert casting a firebrand into the halls of Erechtheus.

ION. What sort of brand or flaming fire was it?

CRE. Thou didst design to seize my home against my will, and make it thine.

ION. What! when my father offered me a kingdom of his getting.

CRE. How had the sons of Æolus any share in the realm of Pallas?

ION. Arms, not words, he brought to champion it.

my salvation by showing me what to expect when I was wholly in your power."

CRE. No mere ally could enter into an inheritance in my land.

ION. And was it then from fear of consequences that thou didst try to slay me?

CRE. Yes, lest I should myself perish if thou wert spared.

ION. Doth thy childlessness make thee envious that my father found me?

CRE. And thou, wilt thou rob the childless of her home?

ION. Had I then no share at all in my father's heritage?

CRE. All that his sword and shield had won was thine, and thine alone.

ION. Quit the altar and sanctuary built for gods.

CRE. Go bid thy own mother, wherever she is, do that.

ION. Shalt thou escape all punishment, after trying to kill me?

CRE. Not if thou choose to butcher me within this shrine.

ION. What joy can it give thee to be slain amid the sacred wreaths?

CRE. There is one whom I shall grieve of those who have grieved me.

ION. Oh! 'tis passing strange how badly the deity hath enacted laws for mortal men, contrary to all sound judgment; for instance, they should ne'er have suffered impious men to sit at their altars, but should have driven them away; for it was nowise right that hands unclean should touch the altars of the gods, though the righteous deserved to find a refuge there from their oppressors, instead of good and bad alike having recourse to the same divine protection with equal success.

PYTH. PR. Refrain thyself, my son; for I, the priestess of Phœbus, chosen from all the maids of Delphi in accordance with the tripod's ancient rite, have left that prophetic seat, and am passing o'er this threshold.

ION. Hail to thee, dear mother mine,—mother, though thou didst not give me birth.

PYTH. PR. Yes, so have I ever been called, and the title causes me no regret.

ION. Hast heard how this woman plotted my death?

PYTH. PR. I have; thou, too, art wrong because of thy harshness.

ION. Am I not to pay back murderers in their coin?

PYTH. PR. Wives ever hate the children of a former marriage.

ION. As I hate step-dames for their evil treatment of me.

PYTH PR. Do not so; but leaving, as thou art, the shrine, and setting forth for thy country—

ION. What then wouldst thou advise me do?

PYTH. PR. With clean hands seek Athens, attended by good omens.

ION. Surely any man hath clean hands who slays his enemies.

PYTH. PR. Do not thou do this; but take the counsel that I have for thee.

ION. Say on; whate'er thou say'st will be prompted by thy good will.

PYTH. PR. Dost see this basket that I carry in my arms?

ION. An ancient ark with chaplets crowned.

PYTH. PR. Herein I found thee long ago, a newborn babe.

ION. What sayest thou? there is novelty in the story thou art introducing.

PYTH. PR. Yea, for I was keeping these relics a secret, but now I show them.

ION. How camest thou to hide them on that day, now long ago, when thou didst find me?

PYTH. PR. The god wished to have thee as his servant in his courts.

ION. Does he no longer wish it? How am I to know this?

PYTH. PR. By declaring to thee thy sire, he dismisses thee from this land.

Ion. Is it by his command thou keepest these relics, or why?

Pyth. Pr. Loxias put in my heart that day—

Ion. What purpose? Oh! speak, finish thy story.

Pyth. Pr. To preserve what I had found until the present time.

Ion. What weal or woe doth this import to me?

Pyth. Pr. Herein were laid the swaddling-clothes in which thou wert enwrapped.

Ion. These relics thou art producing may help me to find my mother.

Pyth. Pr. Yes, for now the deity so wills it, though not before.

Ion. Hail! thou day of visions blest to me!

Pyth. Pr. Take then the relics and seek thy mother diligently. And when thou hast traversed Asia and the bounds of Europe, thou wilt learn this for thyself: for the god's sake I reared thee, my child, and now to thee do I entrust these relics, which he willed that I should take into my safe keeping, without being bidden; why he willed it I cannot tell thee. For no living soul wist that I had them in my possession, nor yet their hiding-place. And now farewell! as a mother might her child, so I greet thee. The[1] starting-point of thy inquiry for thy mother must be this; first, was it a Delphian maid that gave birth to thee, and exposed thee in this temple; next, was it a daughter of Hellas at all? That is all that I and Phœbus, who shares in thy lot, can do for thee. [*Exit* Pythian Priestess.

Ion. Ah me! the tears stream from my eyes when I think of the day my mother bore me, as the fruit of her secret love, only to smuggle her babe away privily, without suckling it: nameless I led a servant's life in the courts of the god. His service truly was kindly, yet was my fortune

[1] Lines 1364—1368 were marked by Hirzel as spurious, and Nauck in his text concurs in that opinion.

heavy; for just when I ought to have lain softly in a mother's arms, tasting somewhat of the joys of life, was I deprived of a fond mother's fostering care. Nor less is she a prey to sorrow that bare me, seeing she hath suffered the self-same pang in losing all the joy a son might bring. Now will I take and bear this ark unto the god as an offering, that herein I may discover naught that I would rather not. For if haply my mother proves to be some slave-girl, 'twere worse to find her out than let her rest in silence. O! Phœbus, to thy temple do I dedicate this ark. Yet why? this is to war against the god's intention, who saved these tokens of my mother for my sake. I must undo the lid and bear the worst. For that which fate ordains, I may ne'er o'erstep. O! hallowed wreaths and fastenings, that have kept so safe these relics dear to me; why, ah! why were ye hidden from me? Behold the covering of this rounded ark! No signs of age are here, owing to some miracle;[1] decay hath not touched these chaplets; and yet 'tis long enough since these were stored away.

CRE. Ha! what unlooked-for sight is here?

ION. Peace, woman! now,[2] as erst, thou art my enemy.

CRE. Silence is not for me. Bid me not be still; for lo! I see the ark wherein I did expose thee, my child, in days gone by, whilst[3] yet a tender babe [in the cavern of Cecrops, 'neath the rocky roof of Macræ]. So now will I leave this altar, though death await me.

ION. Seize her; she is mad, springing thus from the shelter of the carved altar. Bind her arms.

CRE. Kill! spare not! for I to thee will cleave, and to this ark, and all that is within it.

[1] Badham reads *τύχης* for *τινος*.

[2] Following Paley's emendation *σίγα· πολεμία καὶ πάροιθεν ἦσθά μοι* for the corrupt MSS. reading, *σιγᾶν σὺ πολλὰ καὶ πάροιθεν οἶσθά μοι*. Nauck has *σίγα σύ· πολλή, κ.τ.λ.*

[3] Nauck regards 1399 as spurious; Paley preserves it, but would omit 1400.

Ion. Is not this monstrous? here am I laid claim to on a specious pretext.[1]

Cre. Nay, nay, but as a friend art thou by friends now found.

Ion. I a friend of thine! and wouldst thou, then, have slain me privily?

Cre. Thou art my child, if that is what a parent holds most dear.

Ion. An end to thy web of falsehood! Right well will I convict thee.

Cre. My child, that is my aim; God grant I reach it!

Ion. Is this ark empty, or hath it aught within?

Cre. Thy raiment wherein I exposed thee long ago.

Ion. Wilt put a name thereto before thou see it?

Cre. Unless I describe it, I offer to die.

Ion. Say on; there is something strange in this thy confidence.

Cre. Behold the robe my childish fingers wove.

Ion. Describe it; maidens weave many a pattern.

Cre. 'Tis not perfect, but a first lesson, as it were, in weaving.

Ion. Describe its form; thou shalt not catch me thus

Cre. A Gorgon figures in the centre of the warp.

Ion. Great Zeus! what fate is this that dogs my steps?

Cre. 'Tis fringed with snakes like an ægis.

Ion. Io! 'tis the very robe; how true we find the voice of God![2]

Cre. Ah! woven work that erst my virgin shuttle wrought.

Ion. Is there aught beside, or stays thy lucky guessing here?

[1] So MSS. λόγῳ, Badham δόλῳ, Wecklein βίᾳ.

[2] Badham gives an ingenious emendation, *τάδ' ἔσθ' ὑφάσμαθ' ὡς σφ' εὑρίσκομεν.*

CRE. There be serpents, too, with jaws of gold, an old-world symbol.[1]

ION. Is that Athena's gift, bidding[2] her race grow up under their guardianship?

CRE. Yes, to copy our ancestor Erichthonius.

ION. What is their object? what the use of these golden gauds? pray, tell.

CRE. Necklaces for the new-born babe to wear, my child.

ION. Lo! here they lie. Yet would I know the third sign.

CRE. About thy brow I bound an olive-wreath that day, plucked from the tree Athena first made grow on her own rock. If haply that is there, it hath not lost its verdure yet, but still is fresh, for it came from the stock that grows not old.

ION. Mother, dearest mother, with what rapture I behold thee, as on thy cheeks, that share my joy, I press my lips!

CRE. My son, light that in thy mother's eye outshinest yonder sun,—I know the god will pardon me,—in my arms I hold thee, whom I never hoped to find, for I thought thy home was in that nether world, among the ghosts with Queen Persephone.

ION. Ah, dear mother mine! within thy arms I rest, the dead now brought to light, and dead no more.

CRE. Hail, thou broad expanse of bright blue sky! What words can I find to utter my joy aloud? Whence comes to me such unexpected rapture? To what do I owe this bliss?

ION. This is the last thing that ever would have occurred to me, mother, that I was thy child.

CRE. With fear I tremble still.

ION. Dost thou doubt my reality?

[1] MSS. *ἀρχαῖόν τι*. Porson proposed *δράκοντε μαρμαίροντε*.

[2] Reading *ἢ τίκν' ἐντρέφειν λέγει*.

CRE. Far from me had I banished these hopes. Whence, O whence, lady, didst thou take my babe into thy arms? Who carried him to the courts of Loxias?

ION. 'Tis a miracle! Oh! may we for the rest of our career be happy, as we were hapless heretofore.

CRE. In tears wert thou brought forth, my child, and with sorrow to thy mother didst thou leave her arms; but now I breathe again as I press my lips to thy cheek, in full enjoyment of happiness.

ION. Thy words express our mutual feelings.

CRE. No more am I of son and heir bereft; my house is stablished and my country hath a prince: Erechtheus groweth young again; no longer is the house of the earth-born race plunged in gloom, but lifts its eyes unto the radiant sun.

ION. Mother mine, since my father too is here, let him share the joy I have brought to thee.

CRE. My child, my child, what sayst thou? How is my sin finding me out!

ION. What meanest thou?

CRE. Thou art of a different, far different stock.

ION. Alas for me! Am I a bastard, then, born in thy maiden days?

CRE. Nor nuptial torch nor dance, my child, ushered in my wedding and thy birth.

ION. O mother, mother! whence do I draw my base origin?

CRE. Be witness she who slew the Gorgon,

ION. What meanest thou?

CRE. She that on my native rocks makes the olive-clad hill her seat.

ION. Thy words to me are but as cunning riddles. I cannot read them.

CRE. Hard by the rock with nightingales melodious, Phœbus,

ION. Why dost thou mention Phœbus?

CRE. Forced on me his secret love.

ION. Say on; for thy story will crown me with fame and fortune.

CRE. And as the tenth month came round I bore a child to Phœbus in secret.

ION. Oh! thy happy tidings, if thy story is true.

CRE. And about thee as swaddling-clothes I fastened this my maiden work, the faulty efforts of my loom. But to my breast I never held thy lips, or suckled or washed thee with a mother's care; but in a desert cave wert thou cast out to die, for taloned kites to rend and feast upon.

ION. An awful deed! O mother!

CRE. Fear held me captive, and I cast thy life away, my child; I would, though loth, have slain thee too.

ION. Thou too wert all but slain by me most impiously.

CRE. O the horror of all I suffered then! O the horror of what is to follow now! To and fro from bad to good we toss, though now the gale is shifting round. May it remain steady! the past brought sorrows enough; but now hath a fair breeze sprung up, my son, to waft us out of woe.

CHO. Let no man ever deem a thing past hoping for, when he turns an eye towards what is happening now.

ION. O Fortune! who ere now hast changed the lot of countless mortals first to grief, and then to joy again, to what a goal my life had come, even to staining my hands with a mother's blood and enduring sufferings ill-deserved! Ah well! may we not learn these truths daily in all that the bright sun embraces? O mother, in thee have I made a happy discovery, and from my point of view there is no fault to find with my birth; but what remains I fain would speak to thee apart. Come hither, for I would say a word in thine ear, and o'er these matters cast the veil of silence. Bethink thee, mother, carefully; didst thou make the fatal slip, that maidens will, as touching secret amours,

and then upon the god wouldst foist the blame, in thy anxiety to escape the shame of my birth asserting that Phœbus is my sire, albeit the god was not the parent.

CRE. Nay, by our queen of Victory, Athena, that fought by Zeus, in days gone by, high on his car against the earth-born giants I swear, no mortal is thy father, my son, but King Loxias himself who brought thee up.

ION. How then is it he gave his own child to another father, declaring that I was begotten of Xuthus?

CRE. "Begotten" he never said, but as a gift he doth bestow thee his own son on him; for friend might give to friend even his own son to rule his house.

ION. Mother mine, this thought disturbs my breast, as well it may, whether the god speaks truth or gives an idle oracle.

CRE. Hear, then, my son, the thought that hath occurred to me; Loxias out of kindness is establishing thee in a noble family, for hadst thou been called the god's son, thou hadst never inherited a father's home and name. How couldst thou, when I strove to hide my marriage with him and would have slain thee privily? But he for thy interest is handing thee over to another father.

ION. Not thus lightly do I pursue the inquiry; nay, I will enter Apollo's shrine and question him whether I am the child of a mortal sire or his own son. Ha! who is that hovering o'er the incense-smoking roof, and showing to our gaze a heavenly face, bright as the sun? Let us fly, mother, that we see not sights divine, unless haply it is right we should.

ATH. Fly not! I am no foe ye seek to shun, but alike in Athens and this place your kindly friend. 'Tis I, Pallas, after whom your land is named, that am here, by Apollo sent in headlong haste; for he thought not fit to appear before you twain, lest his coming might provoke reproaches for the past; but me he sends to proclaim to you his words,

how that this is thy mother, and Apollo thy sire; while thyself he doth bestow, as seems him good, not indeed on him that begat[1] thee, nay, but that he may bring thee to a house of high repute. For when this matter was brought to light, he devised a way of deliverance, fearing that thou wouldst be slain by thy mother's wiles and she by thine. Now it was King Apollo's wish to keep this matter secret awhile, and then in Athens to acknowledge this lady as thy mother and thyself as the child of her and Phœbus. But to end the business and discharge his oracles for the god, I bid you hearken; for such was my purpose in yoking my chariot-steeds. Do thou, Creusa, take this stripling and to Cecrops' land set forth; and there upon the monarch's throne establish him, for from Erechtheus' stock is he sprung, and therefore hath a right to rule that land of mine. Through Hellas shall his fame extend; for his children,—four branches springing from one root,—shall give their names to the land and to the tribes of folk therein that dwell upon the rock I love. Teleon[2] shall be the first; and next in order shall come the Hopletes and Argades; and then the Ægicores, called after my ægis, shall form one tribe. And their children again shall in the time appointed found an island home amid the Cyclades and on the sea-coast, thereby strengthening my country; for they shall dwell upon the shores of two continents, of Europe and of Asia, on either side the strait; and in honour of Ion's name shall they be called Ionians and win them high renown. From Xuthus too and thee I see a common stock arise; Dorus, whence the famous Dorian state will spring; and after him Achæus in the land of Pelops; he shall lord it o'er the seaboard nigh to Rhium, and his folk, that bear his name, shall win the proud distinction of their leader's title. Thus in all hath Apollo

[1] *οὐ φύσασι σε*, Stephens' emendation for *οὗ φασί σε*.

[2] Fanciful derivations for the names of the four primitive Attic tribes are here given.

rightly done; first did he deliver thee of thy babe without sickness, so that thy friends knew naught; and after thou didst bear this child and in swaddling-clothes hadst laid him, he bade Hermes carry him in his arms hither, and did rear him, suffering him not to die. Now therefore hold thy peace as to this thy child's real parentage, that Xuthus may delight in his fond fancy, and thou, lady, continue to enjoy thy blessing. So fare ye well! for to you I bring tidings of a happier fate after this respite from affliction.

Ion. O Pallas, daughter of almighty Zeus, in full assurance will we accept thy words; for I am convinced of my parentage from Loxias and this lady; which[1] even before was not incredible.

Cre. To what I say give ear. My former blame of Phœbus now is turned to praise, because he now restores to me the babe whom erst he slighted. Now are these[2] portals fair unto mine eyes and this oracle of the god, though before I hated them. With joy now I even cling to the knocker on the door and salute the gates.

Ath. I commend thee for thy sudden change, and thy fair words about the god. 'Tis ever thus; Heaven's justice may tarry awhile, yet comes it at the last in no wise weakened.

Cre. My son, let us set out for home.

Ath. Go; I will follow.

Ion. A guide we well may prize.

Cre. Aye, and one that holds our city dear.

Ath. Go, sit thee down upon the throne of thy ancestors.

Ion. 'Tis my heritage and I value it.

[1] Dobree emends κεἰ τοῦτ' ἄπιστον ἦν ἐμοί which certainly gives a meaning more consistent with the facts.

[2] Kirchhoff reads χαίρετ' for αἵδε δ'.

CHO. All hail, Apollo, son of Zeus and Latona! 'Tis only right that he, whose house is sore beset with trouble, should reverence God and keep good heart; for at the last the righteous find their just reward, but the wicked, as their nature is, will never prosper.

HELEN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HELEN.
TEUCER.
CHORUS (*Ladies attendant on* HELEN).
MENELAUS.
OLD WOMAN (*Portress*).
MESSENGER.
THEONOE.
THEOCLYMENUS.
THE DIOSCURI.

SCENE.—Tomb of Proteus in the island of Pharos.

HELEN.

Hel. Lo! these are the fair virgin streams of Nile, the river that waters Egypt's tilth, fed by pure melting snow instead of rain from heaven. Proteus during his life-time was king of this land, dwelling in the isle of Pharos, and ruling o'er Egypt; and he took to wife one of the daughters of the sea, Psamathe, after she left the embraces of Æacus. Two children she bare in this his palace, a son Theoclymenus, who[1] hath passed his life in duteous service to the gods, and likewise a noble daughter, her mother's pride, called Eido in her infancy, but when she reached her youthful prime, the age for wedded joys, renamed Theonoe; for well she knew whate'er the gods design, both present and to come, for she had won this guerdon from her grandsire Nereus. Nor is my fatherland unknown to fame, e'en Sparta, or my sire Tyndareus; for a legend tells how Zeus winged his way to my mother Leda's breast, in the semblance of a bird, even a swan, and thus as he fled from an eagle's pursuit, achieved by guile his amorous purpose, if this tale be true. My name is Helen, and I will now recount the sorrows I have suffered. To a hollow vale on Ida came three goddesses to Paris, for beauty's prize contending, Hera and Cypris, and the virgin child of Zeus, eager to secure his verdict on their loveliness. Now Cypris held out my beauty,—if aught so wretched deserves that name,—as a bribe before the eyes of Paris, saying he should

[1] Reading ὃς with Hermann and Paley, with Scaliger's insertion of *μὲν* after *Θεοκλύμενον*, instead of *ὅτι δὴ*.

marry me; and so she won the day; wherefore the shepherd of Ida left his steading, and came to Sparta, thinking to win me for his bride. But Hera, indignant at not defeating the goddesses, brought to naught my marriage with Paris, and gave to Priam's princely son not Helen, but a phantom endowed with life, that she made in my image out of the breath of heaven; and Paris thought that I was his, although I never was,—an idle fancy! Moreover, the counsels of Zeus added further troubles unto these; for upon the land of Hellas and the hapless Phrygians he brought a war, that he might lighten mother-earth of her myriad hosts of men, and to the bravest of the sons of Hellas bring renown. So I was set up as a prize for all the chivalry of Hellas, to test the might of Phrygia, yet not I, but my name alone; for Hermes caught me up in the embracing air, and veiled me in a cloud; for Zeus was not unmindful of me; and he set me down here in the house of Proteus, judging him to be the most virtuous of all mankind; that so I might preserve my marriage with Menelaus free from taint. Here then I abide, while my hapless lord has gathered an army, and is setting out for the towers of Ilium to track and recover me. And there by Scamander's streams hath many a life breathed out its last, and all for me; and I, that have endured all this, am accursed, and seem to have embroiled all Hellas in a mighty war by proving a traitress to my husband. Why, then, do I prolong my life? Because I heard Hermes declare, that I should yet again make my home on Sparta's glorious soil, with my lord,—for Hermes knew I never went to Ilium,—that so I might never submit to any other's wooing. Now as long as Proteus gazed upon yon glorious sun, I was safe from marriage; but when o'er him the dark grave closed, the dead man's son was eager for my hand. But I, from regard to my former husband, am throwing myself down in suppliant wise before this tomb of Proteus, praying him to guard my husband's honour, that, though through Hellas I

bear a name dishonoured, at least my body here may not incur disgrace.

TEU. Who is lord and master of this fenced palace? The house is one I may compare to the halls of Plutus, with its royal bulwarks and towering buildings. Ha! great gods! what sight is here? I see the counterfeit of that fell murderous dame, who ruined me and all the Achæans. May Heaven show its loathing for thee, so much dost thou resemble Helen! Were I not standing on a foreign soil, with this well-aimed shaft had I worked thy death, thy reward for resembling the daughter of Zeus.

HEL. Oh! why, poor man, whoe'er thou art, dost thou turn from me, loathing me for those troubles Helen caused?

TEU. I was wrong; I yielded to my anger more than I ought; my [1] reason was, the hate all Hellas bears to that daughter of Zeus. Pardon me, lady, for the words I uttered.

HEL. Who art thou? whence comest thou to visit this land?

TEU. One of those hapless Achæans am I, lady.

HEL.[2] No wonder then that thou dost hate Helen. But say, who art thou? Whence comest? By what name am I to call thee?

TEU. My name is Teucer; my sire was Telamon, and Salamis is the land that nurtured me.

HEL. Then why art thou visiting these meadows by the Nile?

TEU. A wanderer I, an exile from my native land.

HEL. Thine must be a piteous lot; who from thy country drives thee out?

TEU.[3] My father Telamon. Couldst find a nearer and a dearer?

[1] This line is bracketed by Nauck as suspicious.

[2] Badham regards the next three lines as spurious.

[3] Nauck considers this and the next line interpolated.

HEL. But why? This case is surely fraught with woe.

TEU. The death of Aias my brother at Troy, was my ruin.

HEL. How so? surely 'twas not thy sword that stole his life away?

TEU. He threw himself on his own blade and died.

HEL. Was he mad? for who with sense endowed would bring himself to this?

TEU. Dost thou know aught of Achilles, son of Peleus?

HEL. He came, so I have heard, to woo Helen once.

TEU. When he died, he left his arms for his comrades to contest.

HEL. Well, if he did, what harm herein to Aias?

TEU. When another won these arms, to himself he put an end.

HEL. Art thou then a sufferer by woes that he inflicted?

TEU. Yes, because I did not join him in his death.

HEL. So thou camest, sir stranger, to Ilium's famous town?

TEU. Aye, and, after helping to sack it, myself did learn what ruin meant.

HEL. Is Troy already fired and utterly by flames consumed?

TEU. Yea, so that not so much as one vestige of her walls is now to be seen.

HEL. Woe is thee, poor Helen! thou art the cause of Phrygia's ruin.

TEU. And of Achæa's too. Ah! 'tis a tale of grievous misery!

HEL. How long is it since the city was sacked?

TEU. Nigh seven fruitful[1] seasons have come and gone.

HEL. And how much longer did ye abide in Troy?

TEU. Many a weary month, till through ten full years the moon had held her course.

[1] Nauck proposes καμπίμους for καρπίμους, but unnecessarily it seems.

HEL. And did ye capture that Spartan dame?

TEU. Menelaus caught her by the hair, and was for dragging her away.

HEL. Didst thou thyself behold that unhappy one? or art thou speaking from hearsay?

TEU. As plain as I now see thee, I then saw her.

HEL. Consider whether ye were but indulging an idle fancy sent by heaven.

TEU. Bethink thee of some other topic; no more of her!

HEL.[1] Are you so sure this fancy was reliable?

TEU.[2] With these eyes I saw her face to face, if so be I see thee now.

HEL. Hath Menelaus reached his home by this time with his wife?

TEU. No; he is neither in Argos, nor yet by the streams of Eurotas.

HEL. Ah me! here is evil news for those to whom thou art telling it.

TEU. 'Tis said he disappeared with his wife.

HEL. Did not all the Argives make the passage together?

TEU. Yes; but a tempest scattered them in every direction.

HEL. In what quarter of the broad ocean?

TEU. They were crossing the Ægean in mid channel.

HEL. And after that, doth no man know of Menelaus' arrival?

TEU. No, none; but through Hellas is he reported to be dead.

HEL. Then am I lost. Is the daughter of Thestius alive?

[1] Nauck brackets this line and the next; they were also condemned by Ribbeck and Czwalina.

[2] Reading *αὐτὸς γὰρ ὅσσοις εἶδον, εἰ καὶ νῦν σ'ὁρῶ.* The correction *εἶδον εἰ* is due to Clark, the *καὶ νῦν σ' ὁρῶ* to Hermann.

TEU. Dost speak of Leda? She is dead; aye, dead and gone.

HEL. Was it Helen's shame that caused her death?

TEU. Aye, 'tis said she tied the noose about her noble neck.

HEL. Are the sons of Tyndareus still alive or not?

TEU. Dead, and yet alive: 'tis a double story.

HEL. Which is the more credible report? Woe is me for my sorrows!

TEU. Men say that they are gods in the likeness of stars.

HEL. That is happy news; but what is the other rumour?

TEU. That they by self-inflicted wounds gave up the ghost because of their sister's shame. But enough of such talk! I have no wish to multiply my griefs. The reason of my coming to this royal palace was a wish to see that famous prophetess Theonoe. Do thou the means afford, that I from her may obtain an oracle how I shall steer a favourable course to the sea-girt shores of Cyprus; for there Apollo hath declared my home shall be, giving to it the name of Salamis, my island home, in honour of that fatherland across the main.

HEL. That shall the voyage itself explain, sir stranger; but do thou leave these shores and fly, ere the son of Proteus, the ruler of this land, catch sight of thee. Now is he away with his trusty hounds tracking his savage quarry to the death; for every stranger that he catcheth from the land of Hellas doth he slay. His reason never ask to know; my lips are sealed; for what could word of mine avail thee?

TEU. Lady, thy words are fair. Heaven grant thee a fair requital for this kindness! For though in form thou dost resemble Helen, thy soul is not like hers, nay, very different. Perdition seize her! May she never reach the streams of Eurotas! But thine be joy for evermore, lady!

[*Exit* TEUCER.

HEL. Ah me! what piteous dirge shall I strive to utter, now that I am beginning my strain of bitter lamentation? What Muse shall I approach with tears or songs of death or woe? Ah me! ye Sirens, Earth's virgin daughters, wingèd maids, come, oh! come to aid my mourning, bringing with you the Libyan flute or pipe, to[1] waft to Persephone's ear a tearful plaint, the echo of my sorrow, with grief for grief, and mournful chant for chant, with songs of death and doom to match my lamentation, that in return she may receive from me, besides my tears, dirges for the departed dead beneath her gloomy roof!

CHO. Beside the deep-blue water I chanced to be hanging purple robes along the tendrils green and on the sprouting reeds, to dry them in the sun-god's golden blaze, when[2] lo! I heard a sound of woe, a mournful wail, the voice of one crying aloud in her anguish; yea, such a cry of woe as Naiad nymph might send ringing o'er the hills, while to her cry the depths of rocky grots re-echo her screams at the violence of Pan.

HEL. Woe! woe! ye maids of Hellas, booty of barbarian sailors! one hath come, an Achæan mariner, bringing fresh tears to me, the news of Ilium's overthrow, how that it is left to the mercy of the foeman's flame, and all for me the murderess, or for my name with sorrow fraught. While for anguish at my deed of shame, hath Leda sought her death by hanging; and on the deep, to weary wandering doomed my lord hath met his end; and Castor and his brother, twin glory of their native land, are vanished from men's sight, leaving the plains that shook to their galloping steeds, and the course beside reed-fringed Eurotas, where those youthful athletes strove.

CHO. Ah, misery! Alas! for thy grievous destiny!

[1] Paley's reading, adopted from Hermann, is here followed.

[2] Reading with Badham *ἔνθεν οἰκτρὸν ὔμαδον ἔκλυον*, and omitting *ἀνεβόασεν*, with a lacuna before *αἰάγμασι*.

Woe for thy sad lot, lady! Ah! 'twas a day of sorrow meted out for thee when Zeus came glancing through the sky on snowy pinions like a swan and won thy mother's heart. What evil is not thine? Is there a grief in life that thou hast not endured? Thy mother is dead; the two dear sons of Zeus have perished miserably,[1] and thou art severed from thy country's sight, while through the towns of men a rumour runs, consigning thee, my honoured mistress, to a barbarian's bed; and 'mid the ocean waves thy lord hath lost his life, and never, never more shalt thou fill with glee thy father's halls or Athena's temple of the "Brazen House."

HEL. Ah! who was that Phrygian, who was he,[2] that felled that pine with sorrow fraught for Ilium, and for those that came from Hellas? Hence it was that Priam's son his cursed barque did build, and sped by barbarian oars sailed unto my home, in quest of beauty, woman's curse, to win me for his bride; and with him sailed the treacherous queen of Love, on slaughter bent, with death alike for Priam's sons, and Danai too. Ah me! for my hard lot! Next, Hera, stately bride of Zeus, seated on her golden throne, sent the son of Maia, swift of foot, who caught me up as I was gathering fresh rose-buds in the folds of my robe, that I might go to the "Brazen House," and bore me through the air to this loveless land, making me an object of unhappy strife 'twixt Hellas and the race of Priam. And my name is but a sound without reality beside the streams of Simois.

CHO. Well I know thou hast a bitter lot to bear; still 'tis best to bear as lightly as we may the ills that life is heir to.

HEL. Good friends, to what a fate am I united? Did not my mother bear me to be a monster to the world? For[3]

[1] Herwerden conjectures *οὐκ ἔστ' ἐν φάει* for MS. *οὐκ εὐδαιμονεῖ*.

[2] The reading followed is Hermann's correction, as adopted by Paley in place of the old unmetrical and unmeaning reading.

[3] Badham regards lines 257-259 as spurious.

no woman, Hellene or barbarian, gives birth to babes in eggs inclosed, as they say Leda bare me to Zeus. My life and all I do is one miracle, partly owing to Hera, and partly is my beauty to blame. Would God I could rub my beauty out like a picture, and assume [1] hereafter in its stead a form less comely, and oh! that Hellas had forgotten the evil fate that now I bear, and were now remembering my career of honour as surely as they do my deeds of shame. Now, if a man doth turn his eyes to a single phase of fortune, and meets ill-usage at heaven's hands, 'tis hard no doubt; but still it can be borne; but I in countless troubles am involved. First, although I never sinned, my good name is gone. And this is a grief beyond the reality, if a man incurs blame for sins that are not his. Next, have the gods removed me from my native land, to dwell with men of barbarous habits, and reft of every friend, I am become a slave though free by birth; for amongst barbarians all are slaves but one. And the last anchor that held my fortunes, the hope that my husband would return one day, and rid me of my woes, is now no more, lost since the day he died. My mother too, is dead, and I am called her murderess, unjustly it is true, but still that injustice is mine to bear; and she that was the glory of my house, my darling child, is growing old and grey, unwedded still; and those twin brethren, called the sons of Zeus, are now no more. But 'tis fortune, not my own doing, that hath crushed me with sorrow and slain me. And this is the last evil of all; if ever I come to my native land, they will shut me up in prison, thinking me that Helen of Ilium, in quest of whom Menelaus came thither. Were my husband still alive, we might have recognized each other, by having recourse to tokens which ourselves alone would know. But now this may not be, nor is there any chance of his escape. Why then do I prolong

[1] Reading Hermann's λάβοιν=λάβοιμι for MS. λαβεῖν. Porson proposed 'λαβον and Nauck's text gives ἔλαβον.

my life? What fortune have I still in store? Shall I choose marriage as an alternative of evils, and dwell with a barbarian lord, seated at his sumptuous board? No! when a husband she loathes is mated with a woman, even life is loathly to her. Best for her to die; but how shall I die a noble death? The[1] dangling noose is an uncomely end; even slaves consider it a disgrace; to stab oneself hath something fair and noble in it; 'tis a small thing that moment of ridding the flesh[2] of life. Yes, it must be; I am plunged so deep in misery; for that beauty, which to other women is a boon, to me hath been a very bane.

Cho. Helen, never believe that the stranger, whoe'er he was that came, has spoken naught but truth.

Hel. Yet he said so clearly that my lord was dead.

Cho. There is much that falsehood seems to make quite clear.

Hel. The word[3] of truth hath a very different sound to falsehood.

Cho. Thou art inclined to misfortune, rather than to luck.

Hel. Fear girds me with terrors as with a garment, and takes me in her train.

Cho. What friends hast thou within the palace?

Hel. All are my friends here save him who seeks to wed me.

Cho. Thy action then is clear; leave thy seat at the tomb.

Hel. To what words or advice art thou leading up?

Cho. Go in and question the daughter of the ocean Nereid, who knoweth all things, even Theonoe, whether thy husband is still alive, or whether he hath left the light of day; and when thou knowest for certain, be glad or sor-

[1] Lines 299-302 are rejected by Hartung.

[2] *σάρκα* is Hermann's emendation for *ἄρτι*.

[3] Reading with Hermann *ἀληθείας ἔπη*.

rowful, as fits thy fortune. But before thou hast any correct information, what shall sorrow avail thee? Nay, hearken to me; leave this tomb and seek the maiden's company, that she may tell thee the truth, for from her shalt thou learn all. If thou abide here in this building, what prospect hast thou? And I will myself go in with thee, and with thee inquire of the maiden's oracles; for 'tis a woman's bounden duty to share a sister's trouble.

HEL. Kind friends, I welcome your advice. Come in, come in, that ye may learn the result of my struggle within the palace.

CHO. Thy invitation comes to very willing ears.

HEL. Woe for this heavy day! Ah me! what mournful tidings shall I hear?

CHO. Dear mistress mine, be not a prophetess of sorrow, forestalling lamentation.

HEL. What is the fate of my poor husband? Doth he still behold the light [turning towards [1]] the sun-god's chariot and the stars in their courses?

CHO. * * * *

HEL. * * * *

Or among the dead, beneath the earth, is he to death consigned?

CHO. Of the future take a brighter view, whatever shall betide.

HEL. On thee I call, and thee adjure, Eurotas green with river-reeds, to tell me if this rumour of my husband's death be true.

CHO. What boots this meaningless appeal?

HEL. About my neck will I fasten the deadly noose from above, or drive the murderous knife with self-aimed thrust deep into my throat to sever it, striving to cut my flesh, a

[1] The first εἰς is omitted by Nauck, the second is bracketed as spurious, being also rejected by Badham.

sacrifice to those goddesses three and to that son of Priam,[1] who in days gone by would wake the music of his pipe around his steading.

Cho. Oh may sorrow be averted otherwhither, and thou be blest!

Hel. Woe is thee, unhappy Troy! Thou through deeds not done by thee art ruined, and hast suffered direst woe; for the gift that Cypris gave to me, hath caused a sea of blood to flow, and many an eye to weep, with grief on grief and tear on tear. All[2] this hath Ilium suffered . . . ; and mothers [have lost] their children; and virgin sisters of the slain have cut off their tresses by the swollen tide of Phrygian Scamander. And the land of Hellas hath lifted her voice of woe and broken forth in wailing, smiting on her head, and making tender cheeks to stream with gore beneath the rending nail. Ah blest maid Callisto, who long ago in Arcady didst find favour with Zeus, in the semblance of a beast four-footed, how much happier was thy lot than my mother's, for[3] thou hast changed the burden of thy grief and now with savage eye art weeping o'er thy shaggy monster-shape; aye, and hers was a happier lot, whom on a day Artemis drove from her choir, changed to a hind with horns of gold, the fair Titanian maid, daughter of Merops, because of her beauty; but my fair form hath proved the curse of Dardan Troy and doomed Achæa's sons. [*Exit* Helen.

Men. Ah! Pelops, easy victor long ago o'er thy rival

[1] Reading *τῷ τε συρίγγων ἀοιδὰν σεβίζοντι Πριαμίδᾳ*, as reconstructed by Musgrave and Hermann from the corrupt MS.

[2] The text here is corrupt and something has probably been lost, though the sense is tolerably clear.

[3] Reading *ἃ μορφὰς θηρῶν λαχνογυίων ὄμματι λάβρῳ σχῆμα διαίνεις, ἐξαλλάξας' ἄχθεα λύπης*. Hermann suggested *διαὶ εἰς* for *λεαίνης* and *μορφᾶς* for *μορφᾷ*. The mention of a lioness is scarcely appropriate, for Callisto was changed into a bear, which transformation she is now said to be lamenting instead of a former and greater misfortune.

Œnomaus in the chariot-race[1] on Pisa's plain, would thou hadst ended thy career amongst the gods that day [thou[2] wert beguiled into making a banquet for them], or ever thou hadst begotten my father Atreus, to whom were born by Ærope his wife, Agamemnon and myself Menelaus, an illustrious pair; and herein I make no idle boast, for 'twas a mighty host, I trow, that I their leader carried o'er the sea to Troy, using no violence to make them follow me, but leading all the chivalry of Hellas by voluntary consent. And some of these must we number 'mid the slain, and some to their joy have 'scaped the sea, bearing to their homes again names long reckoned dead. But I, poor wretch, go wandering o'er grey Ocean's swell a weary space, long as that which saw me sack the towers of Ilium; and for all my longing to reach my country I am not counted worthy of this boon by heaven, but to Libya's desert cheerless roadsteads have I sailed, to each and all of them; and whensoe'er I draw me near my native land, the storm-wind drives me back again, and never yet have favouring breezes filled my sails, to let me reach my fatherland. And now a wretched, shipwrecked mariner, my friends all lost, am I cast up upon this shore; and my ship is shattered in a thousand pieces against the rocks; and its keel was wrested from its cunning fastenings; thereon did I with difficulty escape, most unexpectedly, and Helen also, for her had I rescued from Troy and had with me. But the name of this country and its people I know not; for I blushed[3] to mingle with the crowd to question them, anxious for very

[1] *i.e.* when Pelops won as his prize Hippodamia.

[2] There is some corruption here. Hermann supposes something lost, and boldly rewrites the passage (cf. Paley's note), which is inclosed in brackets by Nauck.

[3] The punctuation here followed is that of Nauck, who differs considerably from Paley, putting a comma after *ἱστορῆσαι* alone, and reading *τῆς ἐμῆς* for the MS. *τὰς ἐμὰς*.

shame to hide my misfortunes which reduce me to these sorry rags. For when a man of high degree meets with adversity, he feels the strangeness of his fallen state more keenly than a sufferer of long standing. Dire want is wasting me; for I have neither food, nor raiment to gird myself withal; behold the facts before you to judge from—I am clad in tatters cast up from the ship; while all the robes I once did wear, glorious attire and ornaments, hath the sea swallowed; and in a cavern's deep recesses have I hidden my wife, the cause of all my trouble, and have come hither, after straitly charging the survivors of my friends to watch her. Alone am I come, seeking for those there left some help, if haply I may find it after careful search. So when I saw this palace girt with towering walls and stately gates of some prosperous lord, I drew nigh; for I have hope to obtain somewhat for my sailors from this wealthy house, whereas from houses which have no store, the inmates for all their goodwill could furnish naught. Ho! there, who keeps the gate and will come forth to bear my tale of woe into the house?

Por. Who stands before the door? Begone from the house! stand not at the court-yard gate, annoying my masters! otherwise shalt thou die, for thou art a Hellene born, and with them have we no dealings.

Men. Mother, herein sayest thou rightly on all points. 'Tis well; I will obey; but moderate thy words.[1]

Por. Away! stranger, my orders are to admit no Hellene to this palace.

Men. Ha! do not seek to push[2] me hence, or thrust me away by violence.

[1] The MS. has *ἄνες λόγον*, for which Hermann proposes *ἄνες μόνον*, *i.e.* "only open." Jerram *ἄνες χόλον* or *χόλον*, the emendation of Clark.

[2] Paley suggests *χειρί* as a likely correction of *χεῖρα*. Matthiae reads *πρόσειε* for the MS. *προσείλει*.

POR. Thou dost not heed my words, and therefore hast thyself to blame.

MEN. Carry my message to thy master in the palace.

POR. Some one would rue it, methinks, were I to take thy message.

MEN. I come as a shipwrecked man and a stranger, whom heaven protects.

POR. Well, get thee to some other house than this.

MEN. Nay, but I will pass into the house; so listen to me.

POR. Let me tell thee thou art unwelcome, and soon wilt be forcibly ejected.

MEN. Ah me! where are now those famous troops of mine?

POR. Elsewhere maybe thou wert a mighty man; thou art not here.

MEN. O fortune! I have not deserved such contumely.

POR. Why are thy eyes with tear-drops wet? Why so sad?

MEN. 'Tis the contrast with my fortunes erst so blest.

POR. Hence! then, and give thy friends those tears.

MEN. What land is this? whose is the palace?

POR. Proteus lives here. It is the land of Egypt.

MEN. Egypt? Woe is me! to think that hither I have sailed!

POR. Pray, what fault hast thou to find with the race[1] of Nile?

MEN. 'Twas no fault I found; my own disasters I lament.

POR. There be plenty in evil case; thou art not the only one.

MEN. Is the king, of whom thou speakest, here within?

POR. There is his tomb; his son rules in his stead.

MEN. And where may he be? abroad, or in the house?

[1] Another reading is γάνος.

POR. He is not within. To Hellas is he a bitter foe.

MEN. His reason, pray, for this enmity? the results whereof I have experienced.

POR. Beneath this roof dwells the daughter of Zeus, Helen.

MEN. What mean'st thou? what is it thou hast said? Repeat, I pray, thy words.

POR. The daughter of Tyndareus is here, who erst in Sparta dwelt.

MEN. Whence came she? What means this business?

POR. She came from Lacedæmon hither.

MEN. When? Surely I have never been robbed of my wife from the cave!

POR. Before the Achæans went to Troy, sir stranger. But get thee hence; for somewhat hath chanced within, whereat the whole palace is in an uproar. Thou comest most unseasonably; and if my master catch thee, death will be thy stranger's gift. This say I, because to Hellas I am well disposed, albeit I gave thee harsh answers for fear of my master. [*Exit* PORTRESS.

MEN. What can I think or say? For after my previous troubles, this is a fresh piece of ill-luck I hear, if, indeed, after recovering my wife from Troy and bringing her hither, and putting her for safety in the cave, I am then to find another woman living here with the same name as my wife. She called her the begotten child of Zeus. Can there be a man that hath the name of Zeus by the banks of Nile? The Zeus of heaven is only one, at any rate. Where is there a Sparta in the world save where Eurotas glides between his reedy banks? The name of Tyndareus is the name of one alone. Is there any land of the same name as Lacedæmon or Troy? I know not what to say; for[1] naturally there are many in the wide world that have the same names, cities and women too; there is nothing, then, to marvel at. Nor yet

[1] Lines 497-499 are condemned by Badham.

again will I fly from the alarm a servant raises; for there is none so cruel of heart as to refuse me food when once he hears my name. All have heard of Ilium's burning, and I, that set it ablaze, am famous now throughout the world, I, Menelaus. . . .[1] I therefore wait the master of this house. There are two issues I must watch; if he prove somewhat stern of heart, I will to my wreck and there conceal myself; but if he show any sign of pity, I will ask for help in this my present strait. This is the crowning woe in all my misery, to beg the means of life from other princes, prince though I be myself; still needs must I. Yea, this is no saying of mine, but a word of wisdom, "Naught in might exceedeth dread necessity."

Cho. I have heard the voice of the maiden inspired. Clear is the answer she hath vouchsafed within yon palace, declaring that Menelaus is not yet dead and buried, passed to the land of shades, where darkness takes the place of light; but on the stormy main is wearing out his life, nor yet hath reached the haven of his country, a wanderer dragging out a piteous existence, reft of every friend, setting foot in every corner of the world, as he voyageth home from Troy.

Hel. Lo! once again I seek the shelter of this tomb, with Theonoe's sweet tidings in my ears; she that knoweth all things of a truth; for she saith my lord is yet alive and in the light of day, albeit he is roaming to and fro after many a weary voyage, and hither shall he come whenso he reach the limit of his toils, no novice in the wanderer's life. But one thing did she leave unsaid. Is he to escape when he hath come? And I refrained from asking that question clearly, so glad was I when she told me he was safe. For she said that he was somewhere nigh this shore, cast up by shipwreck with a handful of friends. Ah! when shall I see

[1] Dindorf supposes a line has been lost here, containing a finite verb. Hermann endeavours to complete the sense by reading *προσμενῶ ὅ'*. Others reading *προσμενῶ*, transpose *δισσὰς* and *ἔχει*, after Musgrave.

thee come? How welcome will thy advent be! Ha! who is this? Am I being snared by some trick of Proteus' impious son? Oh! let me, like a courser at its speed, or a votary of Bacchus, approach the tomb! for there is something wild about this fellow's looks, who is eager to o'ertake me.

MEN. Ho there! thou that with fearful effort seekest to reach the basement of the tomb and the pillars of burnt sacrifice, stay thee. Wherefore art flying? Ah! with what speechless amaze the sight of thee affects me!

HEL. O friends! I am being ill-treated. This fellow is keeping me from the tomb, and is eager to take and give me to his master, whose wooing I was seeking to avoid.

MEN. No robber I, or minister of evil.

HEL. At any rate the garb wherein thou art clad, is unsightly.

MEN. Stay thy hasty flight; put fear aside.

HEL. I do so, now that I have reached this spot.

MEN. Who art thou? whom do I behold in thee, lady?

HEL. Nay, who art thou? The self-same reason prompts us both.

MEN. I never saw a closer resemblance.

HEL. Great God! Yea, for to recognize our friends is of God.

MEN. Art thou from Hellas, or a native of this land?

HEL. From Hellas; but I would learn thy story too.

MEN. Lady, in thee I see a wondrous likeness to Helen.

HEL. And I in thee to Menelaus; I know not what to say.

MEN. Well, thou hast recognized aright a man of many sorrows.

HEL. Hail! to thy wife's arms restored at last!

MEN. Wife indeed! Lay not a finger on my robe.

HEL. The wife that Tyndareus, my father, gave thee.

MEN. O Hecate, giver of light, send thy visions favourably!

HEL. In me thou beholdest no spectre of the night, attendant on the queen of phantoms.

MEN. Nor yet am I in my single person the husband of two wives.

HEL. What other woman calls thee lord?

MEN. The inmate of yonder cave, whom I from Troy convey.

HEL. Thou hast none other wife but me.

MEN. Can it be my mind is wandering, my sight failing?

HEL. Dost not believe thou seest in me thy wife?

MEN. Thy form resembles her, but the real truth robs[1] me of this belief.

HEL. Observe me well; what need hast thou of clearer proof?[2]

MEN. Thou art like her; that will I never deny.

HEL. Who then shall teach thee, unless it be thine own eyes?

MEN. Herein is my dilemma; I have another wife.

HEL. To Troy I never went; that was a phantom.

MEN. Pray, who fashions living bodies?

HEL. The air, whence thou hast a wife of heaven's workmanship.

MEN. What god's handiwork? Strange is the tale thou tellest.

HEL. Hera made it as a substitute, to keep me from Paris.

MEN. How then couldst thou have been here, and in Troy, at the same time?

[1] Lightfoot proposed *ἀποστερεῖς*, the meaning then being "thy likeness to Helen robs me of all certainty in deciding which of you is really my wife." Nauck here, as in many other difficult passages, pronounces the line corrupt, perhaps truly.

[2] The line is corrupt, and no very satisfactory emendation has been offered; that of Rauchenstein, followed by Nauck, *τί σοι δεῖ πίστεως σαφεστέρας*, perhaps gives the sense.

HEL. The name may be in many a place at once, though not the body.

MEN. Unhand me! the sorrows I brought with me suffice.

HEL. What! wilt leave me, and take that phantom bride away?

MEN For thy likeness unto Helen, fare thee well.

HEL. Ruined! in thee I found my lord only to lose thee.

MEN. The greatness of my troubles at Troy convinces me; thou dost not.

HEL. Ah, woe is me! who was ever more unfortunate than I? Those whom I love best are leaving me, nor shall I ever reach Hellas, my own dear native land.

MES. (*entering hurriedly.*) At last I find thee, Menelaus, after an anxious search, not till I have wandered through the length and breadth of this foreign strand; I am sent by thy comrades, whom thou didst leave behind.

MEN. What news? surely you are not being spoiled by the barbarians?

MES. A miracle[1] hath happened; my words are too weak for the reality.

MEN. Speak; for judging by this haste, thou hast stirring news.

MES. My message is: thy countless toils have all been toiled in vain.

MEN. That is an old tale of woe to mourn! come, thy news?

MES. Thy wife hath disappeared, soaring away into the embracing air; in heaven she now is hidden, and as she left the hollowed cave where we were guarding her, she hailed us thus, "Ye hapless Phrygians, and all Achæa's race! for me upon Scamander's strand by Hera's arts ye died from day to day, in the false belief that Helen was in the hands

[1] Reading with Clark *θαυμάσαι· ἐλασσον τοὔνομ' ἢ τὸ πρᾶγμ' ἔχω, i.e.* "Miracle is all I can call it, but even that is too weak a word for the reality."

of Paris. But I, since I have stayed my appointed time, and kept the laws of fate, will now depart unto the sky that gave me birth; but the unhappy daughter of Tyndareus, through no fault of hers, hath borne an evil name without reason." (*Catching sight of* HELEN.) Daughter of Leda, hail to thee, so thou art here after all! I was just announcing thy departure to the hidden starry realms, little knowing that thou couldst fly at will. I will not a second time let thee flout us thus, for thou didst cause thy lord and his comrades trouble all for naught in Ilium.

MEN. This is even what she said; her words are proved true; O longed-for day, how hath it restored thee to my arms!

HEL. O Menelaus, dearest husband, the time of sorrow has been long, but joy is now ours at last. Ah, friends, what joy for me to hold my husband in a fond embrace after many a weary cycle of yon blazing lamp of day!

MEN. What joy for me to hold my wife! but with all the questions I have to ask about the interval I know not with which to begin now.

HEL. O rapture! the very hair upon my head starts up for joy! my tears run down! Around thy neck I fling my arms, dear husband, to hug my joy to me.

MEN. O happy, happy sight! I have no fault to find; my wife, the daughter of Zeus and Leda, is mine again, she whom her brothers on their snow-white steeds, whilst torches blazed, made my happy bride, but gods removed her from my home. Now is the deity guiding us to a new destiny, happier than of yore.

HEL Evil into good transformed hath brought us twain together at last, dear husband; but late though it be, God grant me joy of my good luck!

MEN. God grant thee joy! I join thee in the self-same prayer; for of us twain one cannot suffer without the other.

HEL. No more, my friends, I mourn the past; no longer

now I grieve. My own dear husband is restored to me, whose coming from Troy I have waited many a long year.

MEN. I to thee, and thou to me. And after these long, long years I have at last discovered the fraud[1] of the goddess. But these tears, in gladness shed, are tears of thankfulness rather than of sorrow.

HEL. What can I say? What mortal heart could e'er have had such hope? To my bosom I press thee, little as I ever thought to.

MEN. And I to mine press thee, who all men thought hadst gone to Ida's town and the hapless towers of Ilium.

HEL. Ah me! ah me! that is a bitter subject to begin on.

MEN. Tell me, I adjure thee, how wert thou from my home conveyed?

HEL. Alas! alas! 'tis a bitter tale thou askest to hear.

MEN. Speak, for I must hear it; all that comes is Heaven's gift.

HEL. I loathe the story I am now to introduce.

MEN. Tell it for all that. 'Tis sweet to hear of trouble past.

HEL. I ne'er set forth to be the young barbarian's bride, with oars and wings of lawless love to speed me on my way.

MEN. What deity or fate tore thee from thy country, then?

HEL. Ah, my lord! 'twas Hermes, the son of Zeus, that brought and placed me by the banks of Nile.

MEN. A miracle! Who sent thee thither? O monstrous story!

HEL. I wept, and still my eyes are wet with tears. 'Twas the wife of Zeus that ruined me.

MEN. Hera?[2] wherefore should she afflict us twain?

[1] *i.e.* the fraud of Hera in cheating me with a phantom-wife.

[2] Hermann's emendation "Ηρα; τί νῷν is followed.

HEL. Woe is me for my awful fate! Woe for those founts and baths where the goddesses made brighter still that beauty, which evoked the fatal verdict!

MEN. Why[1] did Hera visit thee with evil regarding this verdict?

HEL. To wrest the promise of Cypris—

MEN. How now? Say on.

HEL. From Paris, to whom that goddess pledged me.

MEN. Woe for thee!

HEL. And so she brought me hither to Egypt to my sorrow.

MEN. Then she gave him a phantom in thy stead, as thou tellest me?

HEL. And then began those woes of thine, ah, mother! woe is me!

MEN. What meanest thou?

HEL. My mother is no more; my shameful marriage[2] made her fix the noose about her neck.

MEN. Ah me! is our daughter Hermione yet alive?

HEL. Still unwed, and childless still, she mourns my fatal marriage.[3]

MEN. O Paris, who didst utterly o'erthrow my home, here was thy ruin too and theirs, those countless mail-clad Danai.

HEL. From my country, city, and from thee heaven cast me forth unhappy and accursed, because I left,—and yet not I,—home and husband for a union of foul shame.

CHO. If haply ye find happiness in the future, it will suffice when to the past ye look.

[1] *τὰ δ' εἰς κρίσιν τί τῶν δ' ἔθηχ' Ἥρα κακῶν.* Hermann's emendation is here followed, in preference to Dindorf's which stands in Paley's text, and was originally due to Musgrave.

[2] Paley reads *δύσγαμον αἰσχύναν.* Hermann plausibly suggested *αἰσχύνᾳ.*

[3] Dindorf's reading *γάμον ἄγαμον ἰμόν.*

MES. Menelaus, grant me too a portion of that joy which, though mine own eyes see, I scarcely comprehend.

MEN. Come then, old friend, and share with us our talk.

MES. Was it not then in her power to decide all the trouble in Troy?

MEN. It was not; I was tricked by the gods into taking to my arms a misty phantom-form, to my sorrow.

MES. How so? was it then for this we vainly toiled?

MEN. 'Twas Hera's handiwork, and the jealousy of three goddesses.

MES. Is this real woman, then, thy wife?

MEN. This is she; trust my word for that.

MES. Daughter, how changeful and inscrutable is the nature of God! With some good end doth he vary men's fortune—now up, now down; one suffers; another who ne'er knew suffering, is in his turn to awful ruin brought, having no assurance in his lot from day to day. Thou and thy husband have had your share of trouble—thou in what the world has said, he in battle's heat. For all the striving that[1] he strove, he got him naught; while now, without an effort made, every blessing fortune boasts is his. And thou, in spite of all, hast brought no shame upon thy aged sire, or those twin sons of Zeus, nor art thou guilty of those rumoured crimes. Now again do I recall thy wedding rites, remembering the blazing torch I bore beside thee in a four-horsed chariot at full gallop; while thou with this thy lord, a new-made bride, wert driving forth from thy happy home. A sorry servant he, whoso regardeth not his master's interest, sympathizing with his sorrows and his joys. Slave though I was born, yet may I be numbered amongst honest servants; for in heart, though not in name, I am free. For this is better far than in my single person to suffer these two evils, to feel my heart corrupt, and as the slave of others to be at my neighbour's beck and call.

[1] Nauck's suggestion ὃσ' for ὅτ' seems a slight improvement.

MEN. Come, old friend, oft hast thou stood side by side with me and taken thy full share of toil; so now be partner in my happiness. Go, tell my comrades, whom I left behind, the state of matters here, as thou hast found them, and the issue of my fortunes; and bid them wait upon the beach and abide the result of the struggle, which I trow awaits me; and if mayhap we find a way to take this lady from the land by stealth, tell them to keep good watch that we may share the luck and escape, if possible, from the barbarian's clutch.

MES. It shall be done, O king. Now I see how worthless are the seers' tricks, how full of falsehood; nor is there after all aught trustworthy in the blaze of sacrifice or in the cry of feathered fowls; 'tis folly, the very notion that birds can help mankind. Calchas never by word or sign showed the host the truth, when he saw his friends dying on behalf of a phantom, nor yet did Helenus; but the city was stormed in vain. Perhaps thou wilt say, 'twas not heaven's will that they should do so. Then why do we employ these prophets? Better were it to sacrifice to the gods, and crave a blessing, leaving prophecy alone; for this was but devised as a bait to catch a livelihood, and no man grows rich by divination if he is idle. No! sound judgment and discernment are the best of seers. [*Exit* MESSENGER.

CHO. My views about seers coincide exactly with this old man's: whoso hath the gods upon his side will have the best seer in his house.

HEL. Good! so far all is well. But how camest thou, poor husband, safe from Troy? though 'tis no gain to know, yet friends feel a longing to learn all that their friends have suffered.

MEN. That one short sentence of thine contains a host of questions. Why should I tell thee of our losses in the Ægean, or of the beacon Nauplius[1] lighted on Eubœa? or of my visits

[1] Nauplius, to avenge the death of his son, Palamedes, who was

to Crete and the cities of Libya, or of the peaks of Perseus?[1] For I should never satisfy thee with the tale, and by telling thee should add to my own pain, though I suffered enough at the time; and so would my grief be doubled.

HEL. Thy answer shows more wisdom than my question. Omit the rest, and tell me only this; how long wert thou a weary wanderer o'er the wide sea's face?

MEN. Seven long years did I see come and go, besides those ten in Troy.

HEL. Alas, poor sufferer! 'twas a weary while. And thou hast thence escaped only to bleed here.

MEN. How so? what wilt thou tell? Ah wife, thou hast ruined me.

HEL. [Escape and fly with all thy speed from this land.][2] Thou wilt be slain by him whose house this is.

MEN. What have I done to merit such a fate?

HEL. Thou hast arrived unexpectedly to thwart my marriage.

MEN. What! is some man bent on wedding my wife?

HEL. Aye, and on heaping those insults on me, which I have hitherto endured.

MEN. Is he some private potentate, or a ruler of this land?

HEL. The son of Proteus, king of the country.

MEN. This was that dark saying I heard the servant tell.

HEL. At which of the barbarian's gates wert thou standing?

MEN. Here, whence like a beggar I was like to be driven.

foully slain as a traitor by the machinations of Odysseus, lighted a false beacon on Eubœa and lured the Greek fleet to destruction as it returned from Troy.

[1] The western boundary of the Delta of Egypt was so called.

[2] This line is condemned by most editors as an interpolation from Phœnissæ 972.

HEL. Surely thou wert not begging victuals? Ah, woe is me!

MEN. That was what I was doing, though I had not the name of beggar.

HEL. Of course thou knowest, then, all about my marriage.

MEN. I do. But whether thou hast escaped thy lover, I know not.

HEL. Be well assured I have kept my body chaste.

MEN. How wilt thou convince me of this? If true, thy words are sweet.

HEL. Dost see the wretched station I have kept at this tomb?

MEN. I see, alas! a bed of straw; but what hast thou to do with it?

HEL. There I crave escape from this marriage as a suppliant.

MEN. For want of an altar, or because it is the barbarians' way?

HEL. This was as good a protection to me as the gods' temples.

MEN. May I not then even bear thee homeward on my ship?

HEL. The sword far sooner than thy wife's embrace is waiting thee.

MEN. So should I be of all men the most miserable.

HEL. Put shame aside, and fly from this land.

MEN. Leaving thee behind? 'twas for thy sake I sacked Troy.

HEL. Better so, than that our union should cause thy death.

MEN. Oh! these are coward words, unworthy of those days at Troy!

HEL. Thou canst not slay the prince, thy possible intention.

MEN. Hath he, then, a body which steel cannot wound?

HEL. Thou shalt hear. But to attempt impossibilities is no mark of wisdom.

MEN. Am I to let them bind my hands, and say nothing?

HEL. Thou art in a dilemma; some scheme must be devised.

MEN. I had liefer die in action than sitting still.

HEL. There is one hope, and only one, of our safety.

MEN. Will gold, or daring deeds, or winning words procure it?

HEL. We are safe if the prince learn not of thy coming.

MEN. Will any one tell him it is I? He certainly will not know who I am.

HEL. He hath within his palace an ally equal to the gods.

MEN. Some voice divine within the secret chambers of his house?

HEL. No; his sister: Theonoe men call her.

MEN. Her name hath a prophetic sound; tell me what she doth.

HEL. She knoweth everything, and she will tell her brother thou art come.

MEN. Then must we die; for I cannot escape her ken.

HEL. Perchance we might by suppliant prayers win her over.

MEN. To what end? To what vain hope art thou leading me?

HEL. That she should not tell her brother thou art here.

MEN. Suppose we persuade her, can we get away?

HEL. Easily, if she connive thereat; without her knowledge, no.

MEN. Be that thy task; women deal best with women.

HEL. I will not fail, be sure, to clasp her knees.

MEN. Come, then; only, suppose she reject our proposals?

HEL. Thou wilt be slain, and I, alas! wedded by force.

MEN.[1] Thou wilt betray me; that "force" of thine is all an excuse.

HEL. Nay, by thy life I swear a sacred oath.

MEN. What meanest thou? dost swear to die and never to another husband yield?

HEL. Yes, by the self-same sword; I will fall by thy side.

MEN. On these conditions touch my right hand.

HEL. I do so, swearing I will quit the light of day if thou art slain.

MEN. I, too, will end my life if I lose thee.

HEL. How shall we die so as to insure our reputation for this?

MEN. I will slay thee and then myself upon the summit of the tomb. But first will I in doughty fight contest another's claim to thee; and let who will draw nigh! for I will not sully the lustre of my Trojan fame, nor will I, on my return to Hellas, incur a storm of taunts, as one who robbed Thetis of Achilles; saw Aias, son of Telamon, fall a weltering corpse; and the son of Neleus of his child bereft; shall I then flinch myself from death for my own wife? No, no! For if the gods are wise, o'er a brave man by his foes laid low they lightly sprinkle the earth that is his tomb, while cowards they cast forth on barren rocky soil.

CHO. Grant, heaven, that the race of Tantalus may at last be blest, and pass from sorrow unto joy!

HEL. Ah, woe is me! Yea, all my lot is woe; O Menelaus, we are utterly undone! Behold! from forth the

[1] Hermann has an ingenious but unnecessary correction of this line, *προδότης ἂν εἴην, σὺ δὲ βίαν σκήψασ' ἔχοις*, *i.e.* I should then prove myself a traitor to thee, while thou couldst allege compulsion. Cf. Paley's note.

house comes Theonoe, the prophetess. The palace echoes as the bolts are unfastened; fly! yet what use to fly? For whether absent or present she knows of thy arrival here. Ah me! how lost am I! Saved from Troy and from a barbarian land, thou hast come only to fall a prey to barbarian swords.

THE. Lead on, bearing before me blazing brands, and, as sacred rites ordain, purge[1] with incense every cranny of the air, that I may breathe heaven's breath free from taint; meanwhile do thou, in case the tread of unclean feet have soiled the path, wave the cleansing flame above it, and brandish the torch in front, that I may pass upon my way. And[2] when to heaven ye have paid the customs I exact, bear back into the house the brand from off the hearth. What of my prophecy, Helen? how stands it now? Thou hast seen thy husband Menelaus arrive without disguise, reft of his ships, and of thy counterfeit. Ah, hapless man! what troubles hast thou escaped, and art yet knowest not whether thou art to return or to abide here: for there is strife in heaven, and Zeus this very day will sit in solemn conclave on thee. Hera, who erst was thy bitter foe, is now grown kind, and is willing to bring thee and thy wife safe home, that Hellas may learn that the marriage of Paris was all a sham, assigned to him by Cypris; but Cypris fain would mar thy homeward course, that she may not be convicted, or proved to have bought the palm of beauty at the price of Helen in a futile[3] marriage. Now the decision rests with me, whether to ruin thee, as Cypris wishes, by telling my brother of thy presence here, or to save thy life by taking Hera's side, keeping my brother in the dark, for his orders are that I should tell him, whensoe'er thou shouldst

[1] The reading now followed by most editors is Hermann's, *θείου δὲ σεμνὸν θεσμὸν αἰθέρος μυχόν*.

[2] This line, though at present unemended, is probably corrupt.

[3] Pierson's *ἀνονήτοις* for MS. *ὠνήτοις*.

reach these shores. Ho ! one of you, go show my brother this man is here, that I may secure my position.

Hel. Maiden, at thy knees I fall a suppliant, and seat myself in this sad posture on behalf of myself and him, whom I am in danger of seeing slain, after I have so hardly found him. Oh ! tell not thy brother that my husband is returned to these loving arms ; save us, I beseech thee ; never for thy brother's sake sacrifice thy character for uprightness, by evil and unjust means bidding for his favour. [For the deity hates violence, and biddeth all men get lawful gains without plundering others. Wealth unjustly gotten, though it bring some power, is to be eschewed. The breath of heaven and the earth are man's common heritage, wherein to store his home, without taking the goods of others, or wresting them away by force.[1]] Me did Hermes at a critical time,[2] to my sorrow, intrust to thy father's safe keeping for this my lord, who now is here and wishes to reclaim me. But[3] how can he recover me if he be slain? How could thy sire restore the living to the dead? Oh ! consider ere that the will of heaven and thy father's too ; would the deity or would thy dead sire restore their neighbour's goods, or would they forbear? restore them, I feel sure. It is not, therefore, right that thou shouldst attach more importance to thy wanton brother than to thy righteous father. Yet if thou, prophetess as thou art and believer in divine providence, shalt pervert the just intention of thy father and gratify thy unrighteous brother, 'tis shameful thou shouldst have full knowledge of the heavenly will, both what is and what is not,[4] and yet be ignorant of justice. Oh ! save my wretched

[1] Dindorf condemns lines 903-908 ; Paley would retain them with the exception of 905, which he regards as an interpolation.

[2] *καιρίως*. So Badham for MS. *μακαρίως*.

[3] Nauck regards lines 912, 913, as suspicious.

[4] Clark's conjecture, *τά τ' ὄντα καὶ μέλλοντα, τὰ δὲ δίκαια μή* is extremely plausible.

life from the troubles which beset it, granting this as an accession to our good fortune; for every living soul loathes Helen, seeing that there is gone a rumour throughout Hellas that I was false unto my lord, and took up my abode in Phrygia's sumptuous halls. Now, if I come to Hellas, and set foot once more in Sparta, they will hear and see how they were ruined by the wiles of goddesses, while I was no traitress to my friends after all; and so will they restore to me my virtuous name again, and I shall give[1] my daughter in marriage, whom no man now will wed; and, leaving this vagrant life in Egypt, shall enjoy the treasures in my home. Had Menelaus met his doom at some funeral pyre,[2] with tears should I be cherishing his memory in a far-off land, but must I lose him now when he is alive and safe? Ah! maiden, I beseech thee, say not so: grant me this boon, I pray, and reflect thy father's justice: for this is the fairest ornament of children, when the child of a virtuous sire resembles its parents in character.

Cho. Piteous thy pleading, and a piteous object thou! But I fain would hear what Menelaus will say to save his life.

Men. I will not deign to throw myself at thy knees, or wet mine eyes with tears; for were I to play the coward, I should most foully blur my Trojan fame. And yet men say it shows a noble soul to let the tear-drop fall in misfortune. But that will not be the honourable course that I[3] will choose in preference to bravery, if what I shall say is honourable. Art thou disposed to save a stranger seeking in mere justice to recover his wife, why then restore her and save us to boot; if not, this will not be the first by many a time that

[1] *ἐδνώσομαι*, Hermann.

[2] *i.e.* slain as a prisoner of war to grace some hero's funeral obsequies. Hermann ingeniously offered *ἐν πέρᾳ* "on the opposite shore" for *εἰς πυράν*, but the change seems scarcely required.

[3] Reading Porson's *αἱρήσομαι 'γὼ*.

I have suffered, though thou wilt get an evil name. All that I deem worthy of me and honest, all that will touch thy heart most nearly, will I utter at the tomb of thy sire with regret [1] for his loss. Old king beneath this tomb of stone reposing, pay back thy trust! I ask of thee my wife whom Zeus sent hither unto thee to keep for me. I know thou canst never restore her to me thyself, for thou art dead; but this thy daughter will never allow her father once so glorious, whom I invoke in his grave, to bear a tarnished name; for the decision rests with her now. Thee, too, great god of death, I call to my assistance, who hast received full many a corpse, slain by me for Helen, and art keeping thy wage; either restore those dead now to life again, or compel the daughter to show herself a worthy equal [2] of her virtuous sire, and give me back my wife. But if ye will rob me of her, I will tell you that which she omitted in her speech. Know then, maiden, I by an oath am bound, first, to meet thy brother sword to sword, when he or I must die; there is no alternative. But if he refuse to meet me fairly front to front, and seek by famine to chase away us suppliants twain at this tomb, I am resolved to slay Helen, and then to plunge this two-edged sword through my own heart, upon the top of the sepulchre, that our streaming blood may trickle down the tomb; and our two corpses will be lying side by side upon this polished slab, a source of deathless grief to thee, and to thy sire reproach. Never shall thy brother wed Helen, nor shall any other; I will bear her hence myself, if not to my house, at any rate to death. And why this stern resolve? Were I to resort to women's ways and weep, I should be a pitiful creature, not a man of action. Slay me, if it seems thee good; I will not die ingloriously; but better yield to what I say, that thou mayst act with justice, and I recover my wife.

[1] Nauck proposes *πεσὼν* for MS. *πόθῳ*.

[2] Hermann's emendation *μὴ εὐσεβοῦς πατρὸς ἥσσω* is here followed.

Cho. On thee, maiden, it rests to judge between these arguments. Decide in such a way as to please one and all.

The. My nature and my inclination lean towards piety; myself, too, I respect, and I will never sully my father's fair name, or gratify my brother at the cost of bringing myself into open discredit. For justice hath her temple firmly founded in my nature, and since I have this heritage from Nereus I will strive to save Menelaus: wherefore, seeing it is Hera's will to stand thy friend, I will give my vote with her. May Cypris be favourable to me! though in me she hath no part, and[1] I will try to remain a maid alway. As for thy reproaches against my father at this tomb; lo! I have the same words to utter; I should be wronging thee, did I not restore thy wife: for my sire, were he living, would have given her back into thy keeping, and thee to her. [Yea, for there is recompense for these things as well amongst the dead as amongst all those who breathe the breath of life. The soul indeed of the dead lives no more, yet hath it a consciousness that lasts for ever, eternal as the ether into which it takes the final plunge.[2]] Briefly then to end the matter, I will observe strict silence on all that ye prayed I should, and never with my counsel will I aid my brother's wanton will. For I am doing him good service, though he little thinks it, if I turn him from his godless life to holiness. Wherefore devise[3] yourselves some way of escape; my lips are sealed; I will not cross your path. First with the goddesses begin, and of the one,—and that one Cypris,—crave permission to return unto thy country; and of Hera, that her goodwill may abide in the same quarter, even her scheme to save thee and thy husband. And thou, my own dead sire, shalt never, in so far as rests with me, lose thy holy name to rank with evil-doers. [*Exit* Theonoe.

[1] Badham rejects this line.

[2] Lines 1013-1016 are condemned by Dindorf.

[3] Hermann's correction *εὑρίσκετ' ἔξοδόν τινα.*

Cho. No man ever prospered by unjust practices, but in a righteous cause there is hope of safety.

Hel. Menelaus, on the maiden's side are we quite safe. Thou must from that point start, and by contributing thy advice, devise with me a scheme to save ourselves.

Men. Hearken then; thou hast been a long while in the palace, and art intimate with the king's attendants.

Hel. What dost thou mean thereby? for thou art suggesting hopes, as if resolved on some plan for our mutual help.

Men. Couldst thou persuade one of those who have charge of cars and steeds to furnish us with a chariot?

Hel. I might; but what escape is there for us who know nothing of the country and the barbarian's kingdom?

Men. True; a dilemma. Well, supposing I conceal myself in the palace and slay the king with this two-edged sword?

Hel. His sister would never refrain from telling her brother that thou wert meditating his death.

Men. We have not so much as a ship to make our escape in; for the sea hath swallowed the one we had.

Hel. Hear me, if haply even a woman can utter words of wisdom. Dost thou consent to be dead in word, though not really so?

Men. 'Tis a bad omen; still, if by saying so I shall gain aught, I am ready to be dead in word, though not in deed.

Hel. I, too, will mourn thee with hair cut short and dirges, as is women's way, before this impious wretch.

Men. What saving remedy doth this afford us twain? There is a flavour of deception [1] in thy scheme.

[1] Reading Hermann's correction *ἀπαιόλη* for MS. *παλαιότης*, which may perhaps mean "there is a certain staleness about that suggestion." Nauck retains the old reading, and in spite of Paley's high praise of the correction it does not seem wholly necessary to the context.

HEL. I will beg the king of this country leave to bury thee in a cenotaph, as if thou hadst really died at sea.

MEN. Suppose he grant it; how, e'en then, are we to escape without a ship, after having committed me to my empty tomb?

HEL. I will bid him give me a vessel, from which to let drop into the sea's embrace thy funeral offerings.

MEN. A clever plan in truth, save in one particular: suppose he bid thee rear the tomb upon the strand, thy pretext comes to naught.

HEL. But I shall say it is not the custom in Hellas to bury those who die at sea upon the shore.

MEN. Thou removest this obstacle too; I then will sail with thee and help stow the funeral garniture in the same ship.

HEL. Above all, it is necessary that thou and all thy sailors who escaped from the wreck should be at hand.

MEN. Be sure if once I find a ship at her moorings, they shall be there man for man, each with his sword.

HEL. Thou must direct everything; only let there be winds to waft our sails and a good ship to speed before them!

MEN. So shall it be; for the deities will cause my troubles to cease. But from whom wilt thou say thou hadst tidings of my death?

HEL. From thee; declare thyself the one and only survivor, telling how thou wert sailing with the son of Atreus, and didst see him perish.

MEN. Of a truth the garments I have thrown about me, will bear out my tale that they were rags collected from the wreckage.

HEL. They come in most opportunely, but they were near being lost just at the wrong time. Maybe that misfortune will turn to fortune.

MEN. Am I to enter the palace with thee, or are we to sit here at the tomb quietly?

HEL. Abide here; for if the king attempts to do thee any mischief, this tomb and thy good sword will protect thee. But I will go within and cut off my hair, and exchange my white robe for sable weeds, and rend my cheek with this hand's[1] blood-thirsty nail. For 'tis a mighty struggle, and I see two possible issues; either I must die if detected in my plot, or else to my country shall I come and save thy soul alive. O Hera! awful queen, who sharest the couch of Zeus, grant some respite from their toil to two unhappy wretches; to thee I pray, tossing my arms upward to heaven, where thou hast thy home in the star-spangled firmament. Thou, too, that didst win the prize of beauty at the price of my marriage; O Cypris! daughter of Dione, destroy me not utterly. Thou hast injured me enough aforetime, delivering[2] up my name, though not my person, to live amongst barbarians. Oh! suffer me to die, if death is thy desire, in my native land. Why art thou so insatiate in mischief, employing every art of love, of fraud, and guileful schemes, and spells that bring bloodshed on families? Wert thou but moderate, only that!—in all else thou art by nature man's most welcome deity; and I have reason to say so. [*Exeunt* HELEN *and* MENELAUS.

CHO. Thee let me invoke, tearful Philomel, lurking 'neath the leafy covert in thy place of song, most tuneful of all feathered songsters, oh! come to aid me in my dirge, trilling through thy tawny throat, as I sing the piteous woes of Helen, and the tearful fate of Trojan dames made subject to Achæa's spear, on the day that there came to their plains one who sped with foreign oar across the dashing billows, bringing to Priam's race from Lacedæmon thee his

[1] Adopting the emendation of Jacobs, χερὸς for χροὸς, which is mentioned with approval by Paley. If χροὸς is retained, the only possible meaning is "which draws blood from the skin;" (Hermann) a doubtful rendering.

[2] Line 1100 is rejected by Nauck.

hapless bride, O Helen,[1]—even Paris, luckless bridegroom, by the guidance of Aphrodite. And many an Achæan hath breathed his last amid the spearmen's thrusts and hurtling hail of stones, and gone to his sad end; for these their wives cut off their hair in sorrow, and their houses are left without a bride; and one[2] of the Achæans, that had but a single ship, did light a blazing beacon on sea-girt Eubœa, and destroy full many of them, wrecking them on the rocks of Caphareus and the shores that front the Ægean main, by the treacherous gleam he kindled; when[3] thou, O Menelaus, from the very day of thy start, didst drift to harbourless hills, far from thy country before the breath of the storm, bearing on thy ship a prize[4] that was no prize, but a phantom made by Hera out of cloud for the Danai to struggle over. What[5] mortal claims, by searching to the utmost limit, to have found out the nature of God, or of his opposite, or of that which comes between, seeing as he doth this world of man[6] tossed to and fro by waves of contradiction and strange vicissitudes? Thou, Helen, art the daughter of Zeus; for thy sire was the bird that nestled in Leda's bosom; and yet for all that art thou become a by-word[7] for wickedness, through the length and breadth of Hellas, as faithless, treacherous wife and godless woman; nor can I tell what certainty is, whatever

[1] Seidler's ὦ Ἑλένα for ὡς εἶλε.

[2] *i.e.* Nauplius in revenge for his son Palamedes's death, cf. *supra*, l. 767.

[3] The corruption here is beyond all reasonable hope of emendation; Clark's attempt has been followed, ἀλιμενα ἔ' ὄρεα σύ, Μενέλα', ἀφ' ὃν ἀτάλης, ὅτ' ἔσυσο. This is only one of numerous suggestions for the MS. words μέλεα βαρυδάρου στολᾶς, ὁτ' ἔσυτο, which are, as they stand, quite unintelligible.

[4] Badham's emendation of γέρας in each case for τέρας.

[5] Matthiae's correction τίς φησιν—εὑρεῖν.

[6] Paley proposes to read τὰ θνήτ', Hartung τὰ βροτῶν for MS. τὰ Ῥεῶν.

[7] Hermann's κἄτ' ἰαχήεις, for καὶ ἰαχὴ σή.

may pass for it amongst men. That which gods pronounce have I found true. O fools! all ye who try to win the meed of valour through war and serried ranks of chivalry, seeking thus to still this mortal coil, in senselessness;[1] for if bloody contests are to decide, there will never be any lack of strife in the towns of men; the maidens[2] of the land of Priam left their bridal bowers, though arbitration might have put thy quarrel right, O Helen. And now Troy's sons are in Hades' keeping in the world below, and fire hath darted on her walls, as darts the flame of Zeus, and thou art bringing woe on woe to hapless sufferers in their misery.[3]

THE. All hail, my father's tomb! I buried thee, Proteus, at the place where men pass out, that I might often greet thee; and so, ever as I go out and in, I, thy son Theoclymenus, call on thee, father. Ho! servants, to the palace take my hounds and hunting nets! How often have I blamed myself for never punishing those miscreants with death! I have just heard that a son of Hellas has come openly to my land, escaping the notice of the guard, a spy maybe or a would-be thief of Helen; death shall be his lot if only I can catch him. Ha! I find all my plans apparently frustrated; the daughter of Tyndareus has deserted her seat at the tomb and sailed away from my shores. Ho! there, undo the bars, loose the horses from their stalls, bring forth my chariot, servants, that the wife, on whom my heart is set, may not get away from these shores unseen, for want of any trouble I can take. Yet stay; for I see the object of my pursuit is still in the palace, and has not fled. How

[1] *ἀμαθῶς*, Musgrave.

[2] This line is corrupt, and no satisfactory emendation is offered. If *αἱ* (sc. *γυναῖκες*) is read, it is possible to extract some meaning with small change of MS. reading. Hartung proposes *καὶ Πριαμίδαι*, Dindorf *ᾇ Πριαμίδαι*.

[3] This line is also corrupt, and possibly an interpolation, *αἰλίνοις*, the variant for *Ἰλίοις* is here followed, for which Nauck proposed *ἐλειοῖς*.

now, lady, why hast thou arrayed thee in sable weeds instead of white raiment, and from thy fair head hast shorn thy tresses with the steel, bedewing thy cheeks the while with tears but lately shed? Is it in response to visions of the night that thou art mourning, or, because thou hast heard some warning voice within, art thus distraught with grief?

HEL. My lord,—for already I have learnt to say that name,—I am undone; my luck is gone: I cease to be.

THE. In what misfortune art thou plunged? What hath happened?

HEL. Menelaus, ah me! how can I say it? is dead, my husband.

THE. [I show no exultation in this news, yet am I blest herein.][1]

HEL. * * * *

THE. How knowest thou? Did Theonoe tell thee this?

HEL. Both she, and one who was there when he perished.

THE. What! hath one arrived who actually announces this for certain?

HEL. One hath; oh may he come e'en as I wish him to!

THE. Who and where is he? that I may learn this more surely.

HEL. There he is, sitting crouched beneath the shelter of this tomb.

THE. Great Apollo! what a bundle of unsightly rags!

HEL. Ah me! methinks my own husband too is in like plight.

THE. From what country is this fellow? whence landed he here?

HEL. From Hellas, one of the Achæans who sailed with my husband.

THE. What kind of death doth he declare that Menelaus died?

[1] Hartung rejects this line.

HEL. The most piteous of all; amid the watery waves at sea.

THE. On what part of the savage ocean was he sailing?

HEL. Cast up on the harbourless rocks of Libya.

THE. How was it this man did not perish if he was with him aboard?

HEL. There are times when churls have more luck than their betters.

THE. Where left he the wreck, on coming hither?

HEL. There, where perdition catch it, but not Menelaus!

THE. He is lost; but on what vessel came this man?

HEL. According to his story sailors fell in with him and picked him up.

THE. Where then is that mischievous thing that was sent to Troy in thy stead?

HEL. Dost mean the phantom-form of cloud? It hath passed into the air.

THE. O Priam, and thou land of Troy, how fruitless thy ruin!

HEL. I too have shared with Priam's race their misfortunes.

THE. Did this fellow leave thy husband unburied, or consign him to the grave?

HEL. Unburied; woe is me for my sad lot!

THE. Wherefore hast thou shorn the tresses of thy golden hair?

HEL. His memory lingers fondly in this heart,[1] whate'er his fate.

[1] Heath very ingeniously suggests that at the words *ἐνθάδ' ὢν* Helen lays her hand upon her heart. Admitting this as possible, and reading Seidler's *ὅν ποτ' ἐστίν* or *ὃς ποτ' ἐστίν*, a more intelligible meaning is obtained than by adopting Hermann's *ὥςπερ ἐστίν* and giving a double meaning to *ἐνθάδε* (1) as Theoclymenus would understand it "in that other world," (2) as Helen really means "here by the tomb." Probably the line is corrupt. Nauck suggests *ὥς ποτ' ἐνθάδ' ὢν πόσις*.

THE. Are thy tears in genuine sorrow for this calamity?

HEL. An easy task no doubt to escape[1] thy sister's detection!

THE. No, surely; impossible. Wilt thou still make this tomb thy abode?

HEL. Why jeer at me? canst thou not let the dead man be?

THE. No, thy loyalty[2] to thy husband's memory makes thee fly from me.

HEL. I will do so no more; prepare at once for my marriage.

THE. Thou hast been long in bringing thyself to it; still I do commend thee now.

HEL. Dost know thy part? Let us forget the past.

THE. On what terms? One good turn deserves another.

HEL. Let us make peace; be reconciled to me.

THE. I relinquish my quarrel with thee; let it take wings and fly away.

HEL. Then by thy knees, since thou art my friend indeed,—

THE. What art so bent on winning, that to me thou stretchest out a suppliant hand?

HEL. My dead husband would I fain bury.

THE. What tomb can be bestowed on lost bodies? Wilt thou bury a shade?

HEL. In Hellas we have a custom, whene'er one is drowned at sea—

THE. What is your custom? The race of Pelops truly hath some skill in matters such as this.

HEL. To hold a burial with woven robes that wrap no corpse.

[1] Reading Hermann's λαθεῖν, the line being strongly ironical. If θαπτὸν is retained, the meaning would be "no doubt *thou* wouldst bear thy sister's death lightly!"

[2] Paley's correction πιστὴ γὰρ οὖσα . . . φεύγεις ἐμέ.

THE. Perform the ceremony; rear the tomb where'er thou wilt.

HEL. 'Tis not thus we give drowned sailors burial.

THE. How then? I know nothing of your customs in Hellas.

HEL. We unmoor, and carry out to sea all that is the dead man's due.

THE. What am I to give thee then for thy dead husband?

HEL. Myself I cannot say;[1] I had no such experience in my previous happy life.

THE. Stranger, thou art the bearer of tidings I welcome.

MEN. Well, I do not, nor yet doth the dead man.

THE. How do ye bury those who have been drowned at sea?

MEN. Each according to his means.

THE. As far as wealth goes, name thy wishes for this lady's sake.

MEN. There must be a blood-offering first to the dead.

THE. Blood of what? Do thou show me and I will comply.

MEN. Decide that thyself; whate'er thou givest will suffice.

THE. Amongst barbarians 'tis customary to sacrifice a horse or bull.

MEN. If thou givest at all, let there be nothing mean in thy gift.

THE. I have no lack of such in my rich herds.

MEN. Next an empty bier is decked and carried in procession.

THE. It shall be so; what else is it customary to add?

MEN. Bronze arms; for war was his delight.

THE. These will be worthy of the race of Pelops, and these will we give.

[1] Hermann's correction *οὐκ οἶδ' ἔγωγ', ἄπειρος* κ.τ.λ.

MEN. And with them all the fair increase of productive earth.

THE. And next, how do ye pour these offerings into the billows?

MEN. There must be a ship ready and rowers.

THE. How far from the shore does the ship put out?

MEN. So far that the foam in her wake can scarce be seen from the strand.

THE. Why so?[1] wherefore doth Hellas observe this custom?

MEN. That the billow may not cast up again our expiatory offerings.

THE. Phœnician rowers will soon cover the distance.

MEN. 'Twill be well done, and gratifying to Menelaus, too.

THE. Canst thou not perform these rites well enough without Helen?

MEN. This task belongs to mother, wife, or children.

THE. 'Tis her task then, according to thee, to bury her husband.

MEN. To be sure; piety demands that the dead be not robbed of their due.

THE. Well, let her go; 'tis my interest to foster piety in a wife. And thou, enter the house and choose adornment for the dead. Thyself, too, will I not send empty-handed away, since thou hast done her a service. And for the good news thou hast brought me, thou shalt receive raiment instead of going bare, and food, too, that thou mayst reach thy country; for as it is, I see thou art in sorry plight. As for thee, poor lady, waste not thyself[2] in a hopeless case; Menelaus has met his doom, and thy dead husband cannot come to life.

[1] The note of interrogation is due to Schäfer.

[2] Nauck, with some old editions, gives *τρύχου σὺ σαυτήν*, but Hermann and others, following the Florence MS., read *τρύχουσα σαυτήν*, and I suppose a lacuna after l. 1285. The sense, however, is clear.

MEN. This then is thy duty, fair young wife; be content with thy present husband, and forget him who has no existence; for this is thy best course in face of what is happening. And if ever I come to Hellas and secure my safety, I will clear thee of thy former ill-repute, if thou prove a dutiful wife to thy true husband.

HEL. I will; never shall my husband have cause to blame me; thou shalt thyself attend us and be witness thereto. Now go within, poor wanderer, and seek the bath, and change thy raiment. I will show my kindness to thee, and that without delay. For thou wilt perform all service due with kindlier feeling for my dear lord Menelaus, if at my hands thou meet with thy deserts.

[*Exeunt* THEOCLYMENUS, HELEN, MENELAUS.

CHO. Through wooded glen, o'er torrent's flood, and ocean's booming waves rushed the mountain-goddess, mother of the gods, in frantic haste, once long ago, yearning for her daughter lost, whose name men dare not utter; loudly rattled the Bacchic castanets in shrill accord, what time those maidens, swift as whirlwinds, sped forth with the goddess[1] on her chariot yoked to wild creatures, in quest of her that was ravished from the circling choir of virgins; here was Artemis with her bow, and there the grim-eyed[2] goddess, sheathed in mail, and spear in hand. . . .[3] But Zeus looked down from his throne in heaven, and turned the issue otherwhither. Soon as the mother ceased from her wild wandering toil, in seeking[4] her daughter stolen so subtly as to baffle all pursuit, she crossed the snow-capped heights of Ida's nymphs; and in anguish cast her down

[1] Hermann's correction *ζευξάσᾳ θεᾷ σατίνας.*

[2] Hermann's *Γοργώπα.*

[3] To complete the sense, Hermann and Dindorf give a conjectural line containing a finite verb, thus *προὐξωρμῶντο· Ζεὺς δ' ἐδράνων*, omitting *δὲ* after *αὐγάζων.*

[4] *ματεύουσ' ἀπόρους*, Hermann.

amongst the rocks and brushwood deep in snow; and, denying to man all increase to his tillage from those barren fields, she wasted the human race; nor would she let the leafy tendrils yield luxuriant fodder for the cattle, wherefore many[1] a beast lay dying; no sacrifice was offered to the gods, and on the altars were no cakes to burn; yea, and she made the dew-fed founts of crystal water to cease their flow, in her insatiate sorrow for her child. But when for gods and tribes of men alike she made an end to festal cheer, Zeus spoke out, seeking to sooth the mother's moody soul, "Ye stately Graces, go banish from Demeter's angry heart the grief her wanderings[2] bring upon her for her child, and go, ye Muses too, with tuneful choir." Thereon did Cypris, fairest of the blessed gods, first catch up the crashing cymbals, native to that land, and the drum with tight-stretched skin, and then Demeter smiled, and in her hand did take the deep-toned flute, well pleased with its loud note.

Thou hast wedded as thou never shouldst have done[3] in defiance of all right, and thou hast incurred, my daughter, the wrath of the great mother by disregarding her sacrifices. Oh! mighty is the virtue in a dress of dappled fawn-skin, in ivy green that twineth round a sacred thyrsus, in whirling tambourines struck as they revolve in air, in tresses wildly streaming for the revelry of Bromius, and likewise in the sleepless vigils of the goddess, when[4] the moon looks

[1] Reading πολέων (Hermann) though Nauck has πόλεων = cities.

[2] ἀλᾶν, so Bothe for MS. ἀλαλᾳ.

[3] The translation follows Paley's conjecture ἐκνοσας for ἐπίρωσας; this requires perhaps the least change in a very difficult and probably corrupt passage. The various emendations are discussed at length in Paley's larger edition. The allusion seems to be to Helen's guilty passion for Paris, which is an insult to the majesty of Cybele.

[4] Reading Hermann's conjecture εὖτέ νιν ὄμμασιν ἔβαλε σελάνα which is adopted in Paley's text as the most satisfactory emendation of this very corrupt passage. The last line of this choral ode is generally regarded as a clumsy interpolation.

down and sheds her radiance o'er the scene. [Thou wert confident in thy charms alone.]

HEL. My friends, within the palace all goes well for us; for the daughter of Proteus, who is privy to our stealthy scheme, told her brother nothing when questioned as to my husband's coming, but for my sake declared him dead and buried. Most[1] fortunate it is my lord hath had the luck to get these weapons; for he is now himself clad in the harness he was to plunge into the sea, his stalwart arm thrust through the buckler's strap, and in his right hand a spear, on pretence of joining in homage to the dead. He hath girded himself most serviceably for the fray, as if to triumph o'er a host of barbarian foes when once we are aboard yon oarèd ship; instead[2] of his rags from the wreck hath he donned the robes I gave for his attire, and I have bathed his limbs in water from the stream, a bath he long hath wanted. But I must be silent, for from the house comes forth the man who thinks he has me in his power, prepared to be his bride; and thy goodwill I also claim and thy strict silence, if haply, when we save ourselves, we may save thee too some day.

THE. Advance in order, servants, as the stranger hath directed, bearing the funeral gifts the sea demands. But thou, Helen, if thou wilt not misconstrue my words, be persuaded and here abide; for thou wilt do thy husband equal service whether thou art present or not. For I am afraid that some sudden shock of fond regret may prompt thee to

[1] This line is corrupt, and may, as Hermann suggests, be made up of parts of two. Nauck's reading is here followed, *Κάλλιστα δὴ τάδ' ἥρπασ' ἐν τύχῃ πόσις.*

[2] To avoid the awkwardness involved in the somewhat doubtful Greek *πέπλους ἀμειψας . . . ἀγώ νιν*, Pierson ingeniously proposes *πέπλους δ' ἀμε ψασ' . . . ἐγώ νιν*, to which however Paley objects that *ἀμείβειν* cannot be used of one who effects a change upon another, while Hermann somewhat hypercritically remarks that by this change the several actions described take an unnatural order.

plunge into the swollen tide, in an ecstasy of gratitude toward thy former husband; for thy grief for him, though he is lost, is running to excess.

HEL. O my new[1] lord, needs must I honour him with whom I first shared married joys: for I could even die with my husband, so well I loved him: yet how could he thank me, were I to share death's doom with him? Still, let me go and pay his funeral rites unto the dead in person. The gods grant thee the boon I wish and this stranger too, for the assistance he is lending here! And thou shalt find in me a wife fit to share thy house, since thou art rendering kindness to Menelaus and to me; for surely these events are to some good fortune tending. But now appoint someone to give us a ship wherein to convey these gifts, that I may find thy kindness made complete.

THE. (*to an attendant.*) Go thou, and furnish them with a Sidonian galley of fifty oars and rowers also.

HEL. Shall not he command the ship who is ordering the funeral?

THE. Most certainly; my sailors are to obey him.

HEL. Repeat the order, that they may clearly understand thee.

THE. I repeat it, and will do so yet again if that is thy pleasure.

HEL. Good luck to thee and to me in my designs!

THE. Oh! waste not thy fair complexion with excessive weeping.

HEL. This day shall show my gratitude to thee.

THE. The state of the dead is nothingness; to toil for them is vain.

HEL. In what I say, this world, as well as that, hath share.

THE. Thou shalt not find in me a husband at all inferior to Menelaus.

[1] Elmsley's correction καινός.

HEL. With thee have I no fault to find; good luck is all I need.[1]

THE. That rests with thyself, if thou show thyself a loving wife to me.

HEL. This is not a lesson I shall have to learn now, to love my friends.

THE. Is it thy wish that I should escort thee in person with active aid?

HEL. God forbid! become not thy servant's servant, O king!

THE. Up and away! I am not concerned with customs which the race of Pelops holds. My house is pure, for Menelaus did not die here; go some one now and bid my vassal chiefs bring marriage-offerings to my palace; for the whole earth must re-echo in glad accord the hymn of my wedding with Helen, to make men envious. Go, stranger, and pour into the sea's embrace these offerings to Helen's former lord, and then speed back again with my bride, that after sharing with me her marriage-feast thou mayst set out for home, or here abide in happiness.

[*Exit* THEOCLYMENUS.

MEN. O Zeus, who art called the father of all and god of wisdom, look down on us and change our woe to joy! Lend us thy ready help, as we seek to drag our fortunes up the rugged hill; if with but thy finger-tip thou touch us, we shall reach our longed-for goal. Sufficient are the troubles we ere this have undergone. Full oft have I invoked you gods to hear my joys and sorrows;[2] I do not deserve to be for ever unhappy, but to advance and prosper. Grant me but this one boon, and so will ye crown my future with blessing.

[*Exeunt* MENELAUS *and* HELEN.

CHO. Hail! thou swift Phœnician ship of Sidon! dear

[1] με δεῖ. So Musgrave for μέλει.

[2] Paley's reading χρήστ' ἐμοῦ κλύειν καὶ λύπρ'.

to the rowers,[1] mother to the foam, leader of fair dolphins' gambols, what time the deep is hushed and still, and Ocean's azure child, the queen of calm, takes up her parable and says: "Away! and spread your canvas to the ocean-breeze. Ho! sailors, ho! come grip your oars of pine, speeding Helen on her way to the sheltered beach where Perseus dwelt of yore."[2] It may be thou wilt find the daughters[3] of Leucippus beside the brimming river[4] or before the temple of Pallas, when at last with dance and revelry thou joinest in the merry midnight festival[5] of Hyacinthus, him whom Phœbus slew in the lists by a quoit[6] hurled o'er the mark; wherefore did the son of Zeus ordain that Laconia's land should set apart that day for sacrifice; there too[7] shalt thou find the tender maid,[8] whom ye left[9] in your house, for as yet no nuptial torch has shed its light for her.

Oh! for wings to cleave the air in the track of Libyan cranes, whose serried ranks leave far behind the wintry storm at the shrill summons of some veteran leader, who raises his exultant cry as he wings his way o'er plains that know no rain[10] and yet bear fruitful increase. Ye feathered birds with necks outstretched, comrades of the racing clouds, on! on! till ye reach the Pleiads in their central station and Orion, lord of the night; and as ye settle on Eurotas' banks proclaim the

[1] *εἰρεσίᾳ*, Barnes.

[2] *i.e.* to Mycenæ, said to have been founded by Perseus.

[3] The daughters of Leucippus were priestesses of Athena and Artemis; possibly the name survived as a title for all such priestesses after them.

[4] *i.e.* the Eurotas in Sparta, and the temple of the "Brazen House."

[5] *νυχίαν εὐφροσύναν.* So Matthiae.

[6] *τροχῷ ἀτέρμονι δίσκου.* So Dobree.

[7] Hyacinthus was a beautiful youth beloved by Apollo who accidentally killed him with the blow of a quoit. After his death the festival of the Hyacinthia was instituted in his honour.

[8] *i.e.* Hermione.

[9] λιπέτην. So Hermann, who supplies the lacuna after *οἴκοις* with *θάλλουσαν ἐν θαλάμοις.*

[10] It was believed by the ancients that no rain fell in Egypt.

glad tidings that Menelaus hath sacked the city of Dardanus, and will soon be home. Ye sons of Tyndareus at length appear, speeding in your chariot through the sky, denizens of heaven's courts beneath the radiant whirling[1] stars, guide this[2] lady Helen safely o'er the azure main, across the foam-flecked billows of the deep-blue sea, sending the mariners a favouring gale from Zeus; and from your sister snatch the ill-repute of wedding with a barbarian, even the punishment[3] bequeathed to her from that strife on Ida's mount, albeit she never went to the land[4] of Ilium, to the battlements of Phœbus.

MES. (*entering hurriedly.*) O king, [at last[5] have I found thee in the palace; for new] tidings of woe art thou soon to hear from me.

THE. How now?

MES. Make haste to woo a new wife; for Helen hath escaped.

THE. Borne aloft on soaring wings, or treading still the earth?

MES. Menelaus has succeeded in bearing her hence; 'twas he that brought the news of his own death.

THE. O monstrous story! what ship conveyed her from these shores? Thy tale is past belief.

MES. The very ship thou didst thyself give the stranger; and that thou mayest briefly know all, he is gone, taking thy sailors with him.

THE. How was it? I long to know, for I never gave it a

[1] Anaxagoras, whose theories are frequently alluded to by Euripides, held that the heaven rotated round the earth. This may be alluded to, but the line is probably corrupt.

[2] *τᾶσδε* for MS. *τᾶς*. So Badham.

[3] Scaliger *ποιναθεῖσ'* for MS. *πονηθεῖσ'*.

[4] *γᾶν οὐκ ἐλθοῦσα*. So Musgrave for *τὰν οὐκ ἐλθοῦσαν*.

[5] Hermann's emendation, *τὰ μάκιστ'*, is followed in preference to the many others offered. Nauck regards the words here inclosed as spurious.

thought that a single arm could master all those sailors with whom thou wert despatched.

MES. Soon as the daughter of Zeus had left this royal mansion and come unto the sea, daintily picking her way, most craftily she set to mourn her husband, though he was not dead but at her side. Now when we reached thy docks well walled, we began to launch the fastest of Sidonian ships, with her full complement of fifty rowers, and each task in due succession followed; some set up the mast, others ranged the oars with their blades ready,[1] and stored[2] the white sails within the hold, and the rudder was let down astern and fastened securely. While we were thus employed, those Hellenes, who had been fellow-voyagers with Menelaus, were watching us, it seems, and they drew nigh the beach, clad in the rags of shipwrecked men,—well built enough, but squalid to look upon. And the son of Atreus, directly he saw them approach, bespoke them, craftily introducing the reason for his mourning: "Ye hapless mariners, how have ye come hither? your Achæan ship where wrecked? Are ye here to help bury dead Atreus' son, whose missing body this lady, daughter of Tyndareus, is honouring with a cenotaph?" Then they with feigned tears proceeded to the ship, bearing aboard the offerings to be thrown into the deep for Menelaus. Thereat were we suspicious, and communed amongst ourselves regarding the number of extra passengers; but still we kept silence out of respect for thy orders, for by intrusting the command of the vessel to the stranger thou didst thus spoil all. Now the other victims gave no trouble,

[1] Paley retaining *ταρσον τε χειρι* translates the passage "one set up the mast, another placed the oar, and arranged the oarage to the rower's hand." But Lightfoot's suggestion, *ταρσὸ κατήρει*, which is here followed, seems very plausible, on the authority of Iph. T. 1345, where the same phrase occurs. Badham's *ταρσὸν τ' ἐνεῖρε* seems a doubtful improvement.

[2] Paley conjectures *ἐνετίθει* or *ἐνετέθη* for MS. *εἰς ἓν ἦν*, but without absolutely rejecting the old reading.

and we easily put them aboard; only the bull refused to go forward along the gangway, but rolled his eyes around and kept bellowing, and, arching his back and glaring askance toward his horns, he would not let us touch him. But Helen's lord cried out: "O! ye who laid waste the town of Ilium, come pick up yon bull, the dead man's offering, on your stout shoulders, as is the way in Hellas, and cast him into the hold;" and as he spoke he drew his sword in readiness. Then they at his command came and caught up the bull and carried him bodily on to the deck. And Menelaus stroked the horse on neck and brow, coaxing it to go aboard. At length, when the ship was fully freighted, Helen climbed the ladder with graceful step and took her seat midway betwixt the rowers' benches, and he sat by her side, even Menelaus who was called dead; and the rest, equally divided on the right and left side of the ship, sat them down, each beside his man, with swords concealed beneath their cloaks, and the billows soon were echoing to the rowers' song, as we heard the boatswain's note. Now when we were put out a space, not very far nor very near, the helmsman asked, "Shall we, sir stranger, sail yet further on our course, or will this serve? For thine it is to command the ship." And he answered: "'Tis far enough for me," while in his right hand he gripped his sword and stepped on to the prow; then standing o'er the bull to slay it, never a word said he of any dead man, but cut its throat and thus made prayer: "Poseidon, lord of the sea, whose home is in the deep, and ye holy daughters of Nereus, bring me and my wife safe and sound to Nauplia's strand from hence!" Anon a gush of blood, fair omen for the stranger, spouted into the tide. One cried, "There is treachery in this voyage; why should we now sail to Nauplia?[1] Give the order, helmsman, turn thy rudder." But the son of Atreus, standing where he slew the bull, called to his comrades, "Why do ye, the pick of Hellas, delay to smite

[1] *Ναυπλίαν* is Paley's conjecture for the corrupt **Ναξίαν.**

and slay the barbarians and fling them from the ship into the waves?" While to thy crew the boatswain cried the opposite command: "Ho! some of you catch up chance spars, break up the benches, or snatch the oar-blade from the thole, and beat out the brains of these our foreign foes." Forthwith up sprang each man, the one part armed with poles that sailors use, the other with swords. And the ship ran down with blood; while Helen from her seat upon the stern thus cheered them on: "Where is the fame ye won in Troy? show it against these barbarians." Then as they hasted to the fray, some would fall and some rise up again, while others hadst thou seen laid low in death. But Menelaus in full armour, made his way, sword in hand, to any point where his watchful eye perceived his comrades in distress: so we leapt from the ship and swam, and he cleared the benches of thy rowers. Then did the prince[1] set himself to steer, and bade them make a straight course to Hellas. So they set up the mast, and favouring breezes blew; and they are clear away, while I, from death escaped, let myself down by the anchor chain into the sea; and, just as I was spent, one threw me a rope and rescued me, and drew me to land to bring to thee this message. Ah! there is naught more serviceable to mankind than a prudent distrust.

CHO. I would never have believed that Menelaus could have eluded us and thee, O king, in the way he did on his coming.

THE. Woe is me! cozened by a woman's tricks! My bride hath escaped me. If the ship could have been pursued and overtaken, I would have used every means forthwith to catch the strangers; as it is, I will avenge myself upon my treacherous sister, in that she saw Menelaus in my palace and did not tell me. Wherefore shall she nevermore deceive another by her prophetic art.

[1] Kirchhoff's *ἄναξ*, "bade the steersman make straight for," is a simple correction, if any is necessary.

Por. Ho, there! whither away so fast, my lord? on what bloody thought intent?

The. Whither Justice calls me. Out of my path!

Por. I will not loose thy robe, for on grievous mischief art thou bent.

The. Shalt thou, a slave, control thy master?

Por. Yea, for I am in my senses.

The. I should not say so, if thou wilt not let me—

Por. Nay, but that I never will.

The. Slay my sister most accursed.

Por. Say rather, most righteous.

The. "Righteous"? she who betrayed me.

Por. There is an honourable treachery, which 'tis right to commit.

The. By giving my bride to another?

Por. Only to those who had a better right.

The. Who hath any rights o'er mine?

Por. He that received her from her father.

The. Nay, but fortune gave her to me.

Por. And destiny took her away.

The. 'Tis not for thee to decide my affairs.

Por. Only supposing mine be the better counsel.

The. So I am thy subject, not thy ruler.

Por. Aye, a subject bound to do the right, and eschew the wrong.

The. It seems thou art eager to be slain.

Por. Slay me; thy sister shalt thou never slay with my consent, but me perchance; for[1] to die for their masters is the fairest death that noble slaves can find.

Dio. Restrain those bursts of rage that hurry thee to undue lengths, O Theoclymenus, king of this country. We are the twin sons of Zeus that call to thee by name, whom Leda bore one day, with Helen too who hath fled from thy palace.

[1] ὡς was here inserted by Hermann and Porson.

For thou art wroth for a marriage never destined for thee; nor is thy sister Theonoe, daughter of a Nereid goddess, wronging thee because she honours the word of God and her father's just behests. For it was ordained that Helen should abide within thy halls up till the present time, but since Troy is razed to the ground [and she hath lent her name to the goddesses, no longer need she stay[1]], now must she be united in the self-same wedlock as before, and reach her home and share it with her husband. Withhold then thy malignant blade from thy sister, and believe that she herein is acting with discretion. Long, long ago had we our sister saved, seeing that Zeus has made us gods, but we were too weak for destiny as well as the deities, who willed these things to be. This is my bidding to thee; while to my sister I say, "Sail on with thy husband; and ye shall have a prosperous breeze; for we, thy brethren twain, will course along the deep and bring you safely to your fatherland. And when at last thy goal is reached and thy life ended, thou shalt be famous as a goddess, and with thy twin brethren share the drink-offering, and like us receive gifts from men, for such is the will of Zeus. Yea, and that spot[2] where the son of Maia first appointed thee a home when from Sparta he removed thee, after stealing an image of thee from heaven's mansions to prevent thy marriage with Paris, even the isle[3] that lies like a sentinel along the Attic coast, shall henceforth be called by thy name amongst men, for that it welcomed thee when stolen from thy home. Moreover, Heaven ordains that the wanderer Menelaus shall find a home within an island of the blest: for to noble souls hath the deity no dislike, albeit these oft suffer more than those of no account.

[1] Various attempts have been made to redeem the awkwardness of this line, which is probably an interpolation, as Nauck considers it.

[2] This has been identified by some as Cranae, a long narrow island off Sunium. Others call it Macri.

[3] Reading with Hermann *φοινικὸν παρ' Ἀκτῇ τεταμένην νῆσον λέγω.*

THE.[1] Ye sons of Leda and of Zeus, I will forego my former quarrel about your sister, nor seek to slay mine own any more. Let Helen to her home repair, if such is Heaven's pleasure. Ye know that ye are sprung of the same stock[2] as your sister, best of women, chastest too; hail then for the true nobility of Helen's soul, a quality too seldom found amongst her sex!

CHO. Many are the forms the heavenly will assumes; and many a thing God brings to pass contrary to expectation: that which was looked for is not accomplished, while Heaven finds out a way for what we never hoped; e'en such has been the issue here.

[1] Nauck suspects these closing lines of the play, but they are almost necessary for the conclusion.

[2] Hermann after Canter reads ὁμογενοῦς, which Paley follows.

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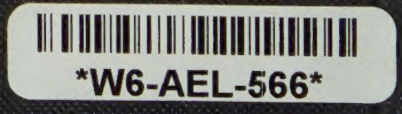
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